

ÆOLUS.

BY ANNA MASON.

"'Love's heralds should be thoughts which ten times faster glide than the sun's beams, driving back shadows over lowering hills,'" quoted I grandiloquently, as I arose from my writing-desk, holding in my hand a card upon which I had just been writing in the most infinitesimal characters at my command.

"Just do hear the child go on!" cried Florence, glancing up with roguish eyes. "But what are you driving at, my queen of tragedy? Neither you nor I are sufficiently sublimated to hold spiritual intercourse with our affinities, without so much as ever caring to inquire in what tenements of clay they live and move and have their being. I, at least, am of the earth, earthy; and admit that were I in love with an invisible I should be consumed with curiosity, like poor Psyche."

"Now, Florry Vance, you know that I do not mean that I desire a disembodied spirit for a lover," said I, laughing; "but what I do mean is, that if I am ever to find my affinity it must not be through the vulgar mediumship of newspaper advertisements and postoffice deliveries."

"Mercy on us! and how then? Do you mean to set up a telephone? Do you expect him to shine out from behind blue glass? What do you expect, my transcendental friend?"

"I mean to send my message by the wind."

"Better send it by a carrier-pigeon, — old style. Really, if you persist in being so stupid, I shall have all the fun. With Percy to assist me, I see a practicable way to definite results. By the by, I suppose you will accept none of his services?"

"Decidedly not!" cried I, flushing furiously at the mere idea of confiding my contemplated escapade to Percy Vance, though he was a mere boy, but sixteen years of age, — which I then thought, to quote David Copperfield, "unpardonably young."

"I want you to be very careful, Florence: I want you to remember that I do not wish my adventure spoken of to him, nor to any one else."

"My dear, your adventure, as you call it, will end in smoke: you have n't the vim to carry one through to a logical conclusion. But, if you are bent upon secrecy, I shall be as mum as the grave. I shall confess to no peccadillos but my own, — not even if they put on the thumb-screws, and stretch me upon the rack. I shall cry *Pecavi! pecavi!* without hinting that I have had a companion in iniquity."

"I never doubt you, Florry, dear: I only warn you to be careful, because sometimes you speak without thinking" —

"And, like the noble Cassius, you 'think too much,'" interrupted my merry friend airily. "Take care that it does not give you 'a lean and hungry look' that will spoil the rounded contours of your face and form divine, and label you 'dangerous,' which might drive off the eligibles. Seriously, Bertie, you are such a Betsy Prim, that I venture to prophesy if you ever find your kindred spirit at all it will be through the authorized avenues of social intercourse. As for myself, I am determined to venture out of the beaten tracks."

"I hope it won't get you into any trouble. O Florry! if your mother knew, would n't she be shocked?"

"Don't mention it! The dear lady's hair would stand on end with holy horror. It would take jars of pomatum, a world of bru-hing, and an electric battery, to cure such a case of capillary distraction."

"And she might blame me for having a hand in it."

"Now, my dear Betsy Prim, as if it were n't I — not you — who originated this bright plan! and as if you could prevent me from devouring the plums, even if you withdrew your fingers from the pie! But seriously, goosie, I do not run any great risk of being found out, with Percy to manage the affair for me; and I need never reveal myself in *propria persona* unless I choose. I have a presentiment that I may get some fun out of the affair, — which is quite an object in this humdrum world, — and I may find a dear, congenial soul; which would be an object when I am so tired of the inane indi-

viduals who dance attendance upon me at present. What would life be worth, Bertie, without adventures?"

"I don't know: I give it up. Don't ask me conundrums, but just read me what you have written."

"It's dreadfully silly."

"Of course."

Florence took up the paper on which she had been writing, and began to read.

"A young lady of good family, possessed of an amiable disposition, fair education, and reasonable amount of good looks, desires to correspond with a gentleman of education and culture. Wealth or personal appearance of no consequence. None but those of unblemished character and good manners need reply, as the undersigned hates a boor worse than 'Mr. F.'s aunt' hated a fool. Address FLORENCE, *Herald Office, City.*'

"How will that do?"

"It will pass muster; and certainly you have not rated yourself too highly."

"I should think not," responded Florence, glancing complacently at the reflection of her beautiful self in the cheval-mirror which was placed as a screen before a sparkling grate-fire.

"Now, Bertie, I must hear what you have written,—though I have no faith in its being discovered by anything nobler than a cat, a tramp, or a chimney-sweep."

"We shall see," said I sententiously, and handed to Florence the card, from which she slowly read aloud,—

"I send by the wind a greeting to him who is to be the master of my destiny. I believe in the guidance of chance; and to him into whose hands Æolus wafts this message I say, 'Come, my beloved, to EOLIA.'"

"How spooney! You'll never in the world hear from it, though. You will be converted to the advertising plan when you see what a budget of replies I shall receive."

"After all, Florry, you are not leaving your fate entirely to chance. 'A budget of letters' implies a choice in selection. You will have to choose; and when it comes to that it seems to me one might as well choose from among one's acquaintances."

"How you do love to split hairs, tiresome

child! Do you give me credit for no intuition? Am I such a clod of the valley that if I were to receive a message from him who is to be my fate I should not recognize it because it comes in company with some meaningless epistles? I have instincts, and a soul, thank Heaven!"

"Forgive me: I did not think of it in that way," said I, laughing at her earnestness.

Then I approached the window, shoved back the filmy curtains upon the golden rod, raised the sash, and leaned out, Florence observing my movements with good-natured contempt.

The wind was blowing a perfect gale. My heart beat rapidly, as if with a presentiment of momentous results, as I flung my card to the breeze, and saw it caught up and whirled away beyond my keenest ken.

"To light upon some unappreciative, irresponsible house-top," said Florence, with an air of disgust. "What a *folle-folle* you are, Bertie."

"Please reserve your judgment, dear."

"Well, I will for a while; and you please shut down that window, for old Boreas is blowing my head off, and taking the fluff out of my hair. It certainly is not a gentle Zephyr who is abroad today."

Florence Vance was the only daughter of wealthy and cultured parents, people of excellent social standing, and a lineage of which they were justly proud. My friend was more than pretty,—a decided beauty, graceful and accomplished withal, and heiress to a handsome property.

I, on the other hand, was an orphan, not a beauty, and heiress to nothing at all, unless I count "woman's estate," which, being eighteen, I counted myself as having attained.

I lived with a Mr. Meredith and his wife, who, having no children of their own, had received me into their empty house years before; and by them I was most kindly treated, most tenderly sheltered.

Mr. Meredith had been an old friend of my father's, and was appointed my guardian in a will which my poor father left, in which he settled upon me coal-mine shares, Western land, and railroad stock, that proved to be utterly valueless.

Mr. Meredith was a busy man, much absorbed in business; and his wife, a lady whose time was very much occupied with questions of social reform and advancement. I cannot pretend to say of how

many societies she was the president. She rode many hobbies with an earnestness that precluded anything like domesticity. So in spite of innumerable kindnesses, for which I was not ungrateful, I had many lonely hours, and suffered much from that vague sense of want so often experienced by those who have no kindred ties. My only intimate friend was Florence Vance: between her and myself there existed the most affectionate and confidential relations.

A few days after her writing of the advertisement, Florence came dancing up to my room, as was her familiar fashion, and entered with small ceremony.

"Here they are, Bertie, dear,—the budget of letters," she cried breathlessly. "Oh, it is such fun! Percy just gave them to me, and I have n't opened one; so that we may enjoy them together."

"What a lot of them!" I exclaimed, as she scattered a handful of letters upon the table.

"And there will be no end of fun in reading them, and deciding which is the one."

How vividly I can recall that bright spring day, and the eagerness of the two girls who bent absorbed over those curious epistles.

I remember a ridiculous, lackadaisical affair, signed by "a lonely widower," who inquired anxiously if "Florence" was a good housekeeper; and, if so, if she held herself ready to enter as a wife "a blighted household, whose light had been removed to shine in higher, brighter spheres." He mentioned seven children who needed a mother's care; while the tone of his letter was throughout of such a whining, sanctimonious sort as to greatly tickle our sense of the ludicrous.

"Poor fellow!" said I; "we ought not to laugh at his misfortunes."

"He does n't need our pity, Bertie, dear: he evidently pities himself quite enough."

There was one from a Spiritualist, who seemed to be extremely progressive in his views. He announced that he was a medium already so advanced in the spiritual life as to make it possible for the departed ones to render themselves visible to him. His spirit wife—whose present home was the morning star—had appeared to him in a vision, and, in answer to his questions, rapped out a communication upon the foot-board of his bed, to the effect that he was to answer the advertisement of "Florence" in the *Herald*, and find in her a sweet spir-

itual affinity, whose companionship would make his earth-life bright.

"Blight not thine and mine earthly life
By cold refusal to become my wife.
Who disobeys when spirit-voices call,
Shall darkness know beneath a gloomy pall.
Florence, the spirits give my love to thee:
Then I thy husband, thou my bride, must be."

"Must I?" said Florence contemptuously. "Some long-haired, wild-eyed, lank individual, who ought to be in a mad-house, no doubt. I can see him 'in my mind's eye.'"

She opened another letter.

"This is a rich specimen!" cried she gaily. "The spelling aims at the phonetic,—which ought to be spelled f-o-n-e-t-i-c. However, it is obscure enough to give to the deciphering of each word a stimulating sense of discovery."

"The letters are hieroglyphics," said I, looking over her shoulder; "and the punctuation serves no purpose but to put out the meaning."

"A liberal splash of ink-blots does n't mend matters. Poor, blighted youth! I throw him over for his orthography."

The precious collection was now all exhausted save one letter, in a large square envelope, addressed in an elegant chirography, and sealed with a coat of arms. We read the words, "*Dum spiro spero*," and Florence cut the envelope carefully to preserve the beautiful seal.

"My fate, Bertie," said she, with a nervous laugh.

And then she read aloud the letter, which was straightforward and simple enough. It read, as I remember it,—

"MISS FLORENCE,—I, who venture to address you, am almost a stranger in Gotham; but I can prove to your satisfaction that I am of good family and honorable repute. By profession, I am a writer for the press. The acquaintance of a young lady such as you describe yourself to be would be of inestimable value to me, as I sadly miss old acquaintances, and the social advantages of my native town. If your advertisement is a hoax, I beg of your generosity to carry it no farther with me, as I am quite serious in what I write.

"SCRIBENDI, *Herald Office*."

"Shall you answer it?" I asked.

"Most assuredly I shall. And now, before you have time to be jealous, let me ask you one question. Have you read the 'Personals' in the *Herald* this morning?"

"No: I never do."

"Of course you have n't, you impracticable little goose; and so I have taken the trouble to bring a copy of the paper with me. How in the name of sense do you suppose a possible finder of your card could communicate with you, if so minded?"

"You don't mean that he has?" cried I, my heart in a wild flutter of excitement. "Oh, give me the paper, Floy! How could you be so mean as to keep it back so long?"

"Because I was selfish enough to want your attention to my own affairs; and if you had read that first you would have gone off into dream-land, and not a word of sense should I have been able to get from you. Besides, I wanted to punish you for asserting that you would have nothing to do with anything 'so vulgar as newspaper advertisements.'"

"Do stop your chattering, Floy," cried I, half wild with impatience, making a snatch at the paper.

"Very well: I'll give you just five minutes in which to read it, and then I shall take up the broken thread of my discourse."

I glanced at the column of "Personals" almost incredulously, and these lines met my eye:—

"**EOLIA**, — Like yourself, I am a believer in the leadings of what we call 'chance,' and have faith in unique messengers. Many who pride themselves upon their excellent judgment are deceived in matters of the heart, while those who trust the gentle leadings of destiny come to their own. Your card fluttered into my hand like a little white bird as I came out of church from a Lenten service: like a bird it has nestled next my heart ever since. How am I to find Eolia? Address **ARIEL**, New York Post-office, box —."

"Of course you will answer it," broke forth Florence excitedly. "I knew you'd never be able to manage it alone by your little selfy, so I told Percy to engage a box at some station, and keep an eye open for letters addressed to 'Eolia.' I'll let you know the number of the box and letter of the station before you're ready to answer this."

"Does Percy suspect?"

"That Betsy Prim is 'Eolia'? No: he does n't. That dear boy is the least curious of any one I know. He carries the virtue of minding one's own business to absolute perfection. But, after all, might you not as well have advertised as to have sent your message by the wind? Does n't it come to very much the same thing?"

"I suppose it does," I rather unwillingly admitted; "but then I prefer my own way."

Before many weeks had passed my correspondence with the unknown "**Ariel**" became of absorbing interest to me. I looked longingly for his letters, which, when they came, I eagerly devoured; and they were read and re-read until their contents were known by heart. The mystery and delight threw a halo of romance about my everyday life, and I felt no desire to break into my beautiful ideal world with the crudities of reality.

The letters, I fondly believed, revealed a mind elevated in principle, and poetic in sentiment. From them I concluded that their writer was intimate with many countries and people, and possessed a wide grasp of literary knowledge.

"He has traveled and read and thought much," I reflected. "Strange that there could come any message from my mind to his to enchain his interest."

Yet I knew, from the way in which he responded to my poor little thoughts, often so weakly expressed, and timidly advanced, that he was interested. He seemed to grasp at them, and make them his own, and send them back to me enlarged and beautified till what I had thought was only like them as the tiny bud is like the perfected blossom. I would not consent to break the subtle charm by actual acquaintance, and in my shyness had again and again refused a personal interview. I dreaded his lacking in my actual self the charms with which he had invested poor little me in his imagination. Once Florence suggested to me that I should let Percy watch for the claimant of "**Eolia**"'s letters, and trace him out; but I indignantly declined the spying system.

"Rest in thine ignorance then, my Quixotic friend," Florence replied good-naturedly.

Afterward, as I declined showing my letters, Floy's interest in my correspondence seemed to die the death; and, meanwhile,

her own affairs moved on in a much higher key.

Almost at the first she consented to an exchange of photographs..

The one she received was *bona-fide*, as Percy testified; for he had once met the original inquiring for letters addressed to "Scribendi."

It represented a young and noble face.

"He looks the very ideal of a chivalrous knight, — handsome, brave, and debonair," commented Florence.

"*Per et sans reproche*, I feel certain," I added softly.

Floy blushed, and bestowed upon me a sudden little kiss.

The photograph she sent in return was not genuine, however. That rogue of a Percy posed for it, — donning his sister's finery, — and the result was far from bad.

"Scribendi" began to beg eloquently for an interview, and Florence decided to accord it. A meeting was appointed, to take place in the parlor of a small hotel where a brother of Mrs. Vance had rooms, and the young people were acquainted. When the momentous hour arrived, behold Percy, radiant in blonde wig, and feminine attire, seated opposite my humble self, dressed like an old lady, with all the dignity gray wig, white cap, spectacles, and knitting could impart. Florence declared I made an ideal duenna; and she stationed herself in an adjoining room to take observations, and decide upon the merits of "Scribendi."

Punctual to the hour he arrived, and was ushered in. Percy received his card with an air of the highest breeding, and read aloud, "Fitz-Hughes Willoughby."

The owner of the high-sounding name was even handsomer than his photograph had led us to expect; his fair hair, golden mustache, and merry blue eyes being in fine contrast to my Floy's brunette beauty, I thought. The interview was quite a success, Mr. Willoughby carrying on the conversation in an admirable manner, — saying little of himself, but discussing with great force and clearness topics of the day. I remember being quite struck by his fund of information. Having nothing to do but make observations, I began to suspect, from the roguish play of his dimples, and half-veiled sparkle of his eye, that he was by no means ignorant of the joke being played on him, but suspected our masquerading. If I was correct in my surmise, he betrayed it

by no further sign, but took his leave with the understanding that Percy, whom he addressed as "Miss Florence," was to receive him again.

No sooner had he taken his departure, than Florence came dancing into the room, clapping her hands merrily.

"What do you think of him?" questioned I eagerly.

"To my confusion be it spoken, Bertie, dear, I have fallen desperately in love at first sight."

"No use," said Percy. "The fellow is smitten with me. When the horrible truth comes out, and he finds himself a blighted being, I am convinced that he will suicide."

"And I am convinced that he suspects 'the horrible truth' even now," laughed I.

But neither of them would admit the possibility for one moment. "

Well, it came out that I was in the right. Mr. Willoughby had been cognizant of the hoax from the very first, having detected Percy's identity in the photograph; but, suspecting a lady to be his real correspondent, he had wisely kept his discoveries to himself till such time as he could force Percy to an explanation, and persuade that gay deceiver to make the *amende honorable* by presenting him to his sister in good faith.

Harum-scarum as Percy undoubtedly was, he did not take this step until he had thoroughly investigated Mr. Willoughby's antecedents, knowing well that his parents would be very strict in their inquiries were the gentleman to be admitted as a guest, at their fireside. Mr. Willoughby's family, as well as his personal character, proved to be unexceptionable, and Mr. and Mrs. Vance, being satisfied on that score, received him with cordiality, — not having the slightest idea of the very reprehensible manner in which their son had made his acquaintance.

Ah, well! who has not foreseen that they would fancy each other? — I mean Mr. Willoughby and Florence, of course. They both had youth, health, and beauty, and she had a fortune; while he possessed acknowledged talents and excellent prospects. No one seemed surprised that mutual regard quickly deepened into love, and no one regarded the engagement that was soon announced as anything but fitting and desirable.

Mr. Willoughby urged a speedy marriage, as he said he wished to make for himself a

home, and settle down; and Florence was also eager to begin their new life.

Two weeks before the wedding, Mr. and Mrs. Willoughby, with their only daughter, a piquant, beautiful girl of fifteen, arrived from a Western city, and remained with Mr. and Mrs. Vance as their guests. They were people of much refinement and culture, and Mr. and Mrs. Vance seemed delighted with them; while Percy fell desperately in love with the fairy Estelle.

Florence preferred a quiet wedding to any other, and so none but relatives and intimate family friends were invited. Estelle and I were the only bridesmaids. Of course Percy fell to her. The other groomsman was Mr. Willoughby's particular friend, a Mr. Escovedo, and the very handsomest gentleman I had ever seen in my life.

Floy had prophesied that I should be delighted with him.

"You will find him scarcely less than your own ideal knight," she said, laughing. I was arranging her bridal veil. "'He loves only one, and cleaves to her:' her name is Music. He is as handsome as Apollo, a child of the sun, and as rich as Cræsus. Fitzzy says he has traveled everywhere, and speaks half a dozen languages. He is a Cuban patriot. He once freed a large estate of slaves, staid among them, taught them, encouraged them, and started them all in life. At present he is engaged in some negotiations for his government, makes thrilling speeches, and writes words that burn."

"He'll do," said I, amused at her raptures. "If you'd seen him before your Fitzzy, what would have been the result?"

"Can't say," replied the bride, as she clasped her pearl bracelets. "I think he's too much a creature of fire and dew to have ever pleased me outside of a romance. I should have liked him as the poet—what's his name?—in 'Lalla Rookh;' but for common wear give me

"'A creature not too bright and good
For human nature's daily food.'"

"In short, give you Fitzzy."

"Precisely so, my child."

I was prepared to like David Emanuel Juan Maria Madrigal Escovedo—such was the string of names he bore, his parents, in baptism, having probably thought he could not have too much of a good thing—I was prepared to like him, I say, even before I

had looked up into his dark face, bewildered by the splendor of his starry eyes, or listened to the music of his exquisite voice.

I took in at a glance the southern regularity of his features, the grace and distinction of his presence.

Of course our talk was of our friends, and our conversation so drifted that we were soon speaking of the singular manner in which they had made each other's acquaintance.

"I disapproved just at first," said Senior Escovedo; "for I feared what might come of such an adventure. It was as much out of keeping with Fitzzy's usual conduct as it must have been novel to the honorable lady he has so happily won."

"Percy and I were her only confidants. No other of Floy's friends know the truth, and the whole truth."

"So?" said Escovedo surprisedly. "And I was the only one in Fitzzy's confidence. I had no right to play mentor, either, Miss Fane, for I have engaged in a similar adventure myself; but nothing comes of it. I do not know why I make the confession to you. I am not so open as Fitzzy. I have a dread profound of ridicule. I confided my secret to nobody."

"Who would ever suspect you of an adventure of this sort?" said I, looking up into his sad, grave face.

"They would as soon suspect a demure little Puritan like yourself."

"But, indeed, I have not been so much wiser than Floy: I too have had an adventure, Mr. Escovedo, only, as you say, nothing came of it."

He looked at me curiously, and then smiled, as if amused at some fancy.

Just then the orchestra began to play the Autograph Waltzes.

"Strauss forever! the magician of the waltz," said Escovedo suddenly. "Can you resist his incantations, *senorita*?"

I answered his inviting gesture by placing my hand upon his shoulder, and in a moment we were in the midst of the whirling dancers.

Escovedo's waltzing was the very poetry of motion; and in a moment I had caught his step, and was floating in dreamy mazes very unlike the long, quick, and rather indecorous step to which I was used.

Ah, well! the whole evening was to me a dream of bliss. I felt myself silently falling in love, and could not resist the charm.

Before supper, the bride, who had been resplendent in "gloss of satin, and glimmer of pearls," re-appeared in an exquisite travelling-dress.

Leaning upon her husband's arm, flushed and happy, she approached us.

"Before we go, you must play us your 'Farewell,' Davido: it will seem to me a happy omen," said Fitzy.

Some one handed Escovedo an antique case of exquisite workmanship from which he took a well-worn violin. He bent his chin upon it lovingly, and without demur began to play.

Never in all my life before had I heard such music: it thrilled me with rapture and pain.

The room, the familiar faces, the instrument, even the musician himself, were forgotten, and I was alone in the world with that wonderful wandering voice. My heart was the instrument that throbbed responsive. And now the voice was wailing and sobbing as if it spoke of the anguish of parting; then followed a mournful cadence which spoke of patience through tears during the long waiting night of absence; and at last the voice rose triumphant, and burst into joyful strains, — a prophecy of glad return.

As the wonderful voice died away, I came back to the actual with a sense of its being unreal. I was not alone in my emotion: many eyes were filled with tears, and the applause given was an eloquent silence, broken only by deep-drawn sighs.

"Thanks, my Davido," said Willoughby brokenly. "If ever I am tormented by demons, I shall call upon you to exorcise them."

"It seems impossible that all that was done upon one stringed instrument. At times the effects were those of an orchestra," commented an art-critic.

"It was a wonderful voice, that spoke as never music spoke to me before," said I.

Escovedo smiled.

"My instrument is an heir-loom," said he softly. "World-famed hands that are now dust have played upon it. It is very dear to me: it goes where I go. I call the voice that haunts it 'Eolia.'"

He caressed the violin as if it were a living, sentient thing.

My heart began to beat wildly.

"And I call you 'Ariel,'" said I to myself.

Just then the irrepressible Percy, who had approached us, burst into the conversation like a rocket.

"'Eolia'?" echoed he. "Why, that is the name on some letters I call for! Ah, sister mine! there will be no more such escapades now that you are in *vinculo matrimonii*."

"Oh, hush!" cried I, in an agony of shame and despair, not realizing that I was criminating myself, but conscious of Escovedo's eyes devouring my burning face.

"Now I *have* done it!" exclaimed Percy, in what was meant to be an apologetic tone. "I beg your pardon. I truly had n't the least idea that it was *your* funeral."

"You're making it worse, you bad boy: do hold your tongue!" laughed the bride. "Don't mind him, my dearest Betsy Prim," she added soothingly.

"I don't understand," muttered Fitzy Willoughby, with a puzzled look, as he searched one face after another.

"It is n't necessary that you should, my dear child," said Floy. "However, I'll take mercy upon your curiosity, and explain it to you presently."

"And spare us the remainder of the *burlaburlando*," cried Escovedo, as Willoughby was about to speak.

"I suspect enough to mark you culprit, Davido. A pretty fellow you were to lecture me!"

Here Floy silenced him peremptorily; but Senor Escovedo did not look at all confused, only very radiant and triumphant.

Our little group was broken into, and there followed a great bustle of farewells and kind wishes.

When the others went to supper, Escovedo drew me into the deserted conservatory.

It was a fairy-like spot.

A fountain bubbled up, and broke the silence with its silvery murmurs.

"Be seated, fair Undine," said Escovedo, in a tone of loving mastery.

"Is it true that I have found 'Eolia'?"

"Even so, Sir 'Ariel,'" replied I, trying to control my trembling voice, and speak lightly.

"And we are lovers," said his thrilling voice. "Tonight there are no such questions as 'Who are your family? What is your fortune? your history? your reputation?' Never fear, my little one, but that they shall be duly answered. We both re-

gard the opinions of others, and will do nothing to discredit the proprieties. But now I can only confess: *To te amo de todo mi corazon.*"

I did not understand the words then; but they caressed my ear like sweetest music.

"Nay, more: why deny it? *Nos amamos el uno al otro.*"

He looked very roguish.

"I deny nothing," said I.

"Bravely spoken! Then you will not deny that I love, and not in vain?"

"I am not half good enough to be so happy. I do not see how you can love me, — I am not talented, nor beautiful: you are both."

He silenced me with a long, blissful kiss.

The sides of the conservatory were lined with mirrors, in which the beautiful plants and the fountain were repeated again and again.

I think strict critics would have found fault with it; but certainly the effect was magical.

"Not beautiful!" said Escoveda. "And I have been saying to myself again and again, as I have gazed into your sweet face, *Que hermosa que estas!* I had even wished that my spirit love, 'Eolia,' might inhabit such a tenement of clay."

He drew me before the mirror.

"Is not my bride beautiful?" demanded he. "Disparage her if you dare."

"She does not often look as she looks now," said I, thinking regretfully of my plain, sober little face. "Her cheeks are not so red, nor her eyes so bright."

"And what do you think of this picture?" asked he suddenly, as he put his arm about me, and drew me to him.

"I am not sure that I approve it upon so short an acquaintance," replied I, blushing furiously, and trying to break away.

But Escovedo only laughed, and drew me closer.

"No use to struggle, my little Bertie: you are a prisoner — such a poor, helpless little prisoner — for life."

"At all events, a prisoner who adores her jailor, David," whispered I, struggling no longer.

Of course our conduct was rash and ill-advised: I do not pretend to defend it. But I cannot say that we have ever repented.

My husband pretends that he cannot see that I am a commonplace, plain little body; and as the longer I know the more I admire and almost revere him, our friends shake their heads at us, and say that we are an incorrigible mutual-admiration partnership.

AFTER MANY DAYS.

BY SALLIE A. SMITH.

Everything in that splendid apartment spoke of wealth and luxury. The plate-glass windows were shaded by pale pink and filmy lace draperies, mingling in a glow of colors on the delicate carpet, like the bright sunset clouds. Rare old paintings hung on the paneled walls, and gleaming statues rested on marble pedestals. Costly vases filled with exquisite flowers, volumes rich in scarlet and azure coverings, furniture carved in ebony, with rose-hued cushions, all were a perfect picture of opulence and splendor. A full-length mirror, half hidden by the silken draperies of the windows, gleamed out like a lake of silver from the mist of colors; and standing before it was a girl, slight and delicate in figure, who was surveying herself slowly and deliberately in the shining surface.

"Why am I so ugly, so plain-featured, and of such an ungraceful form? I am rich, have a vast fortune at my command; but I would give all I possess if I could be as pretty as Nina, my French maid. Her hair is so soft and abundant, mine so coarse; her eyes are like stars, so bright and alluring, mine are green in color and expressionless; her complexion is clear and healthy, mine sallow and swarthy. I shall never be loved for myself alone, as one with a beautiful face would be. No: if I am ever wooed, it will be because I have money; because I am Elena Campbell, the great heiress. But I shall not be deceived so very easily."

And, turning away from the mirror, with a heavy sigh, the young girl walked up and down the vast apartment with a quick, restless step, while her dark face was full of troubled thought.

"Tomorrow Cousin Conrad will arrive from England, where he has been living since a child. It is fifteen years since he left his native land. I wonder if he has forgotten the ugly little girl of three years, that he, such a fine-looking lad of ten, used to carry in his arms to see the birds and flowers in Beachwood forest. I wonder if he is as handsome as his picture represents him to be."

And she gazed upon a miniature she held in her hand, from which a bright, manly face seemed to smile in answer to her admiring glances. A face perfect in shape and tint, with dark hair curling about the white forehead; a nose straight, with thin, sensitive nostrils; a mouth firm, yet smiling; and eyes of a rich, velvety blackness, — no sparkle, but soft and sad.

"How many times in the last year have I looked upon your face, dear cousin! and, if I am ugly, I have a woman's heart. I love this counterfeit of Conrad's countenance, more, I fear, than I shall ever dare love the original: for I know no man will ever care for me, and I must put away all foolish sentiments from my thoughts, and make up my mind to live a secluded, quiet life, doing good with my money; and it may be I shall be happy and blessed, even though all alone."

It was late the following afternoon when Conrad Alford arrived at Beachwood, the home of his orphan cousin. Many changes had taken place since he, a boy, had left his native land; and now he returned, to find his uncle and aunt dead, and the little baby Ellie a young lady, while he, although educated, refined, and handsome, was poor, and had his way to make unaided in the world, for his parents, being in moderate circumstances, had done all they could in fitting him for a physician.

The soft summer wind sighed through the maples; and here and there through the trees the river gleamed like a sheet of polished silver, while among the distant hills the departing sunlight lay in broad golden patches, quivering and shifting as the twilight shadows loomed weirdly up like giant spectres.

"So this is Elena's home? I have a faint remembrance of it; but it is far more beautiful than when, as a boy, I played on the green lawn, or gambled in yonder leafy woods. I wonder if Cousin Ella will know me. I recollect her, very indistinctly, as a tiny, fairy-like child, with a dark, sparkling face, and dancing gray eyes; not pretty, but interesting. Ah! I see a lady leaning

against that vine-entangled column. It must be Elena."

And, with hasty footsteps, the young physician passed up the shaded avenue to the piazza, where the gleam of a white dress spoke of the presence of a lady.

"Welcome home to your native land, dear cousin," said the heiress, as she stood upon the veranda, where the green background of clustering vines and purple blossoms brought out in pleasant relief the slight figure in floating white robes, the dark face looking almost handsome when lighted up with excitement, and the usually soft gray eyes bright with pleasure, while the coarse, dark hair, lying in heavy braids around the graceful head, and adorned with a crimson bud and shining leaves, gave a finish to the otherwise plain toilet; for Elena, knowing she had no beauty, would not be conspicuous by wearing elegant dresses or costly jewels.

"Dear little Ellie! you are almost as petite and fairy-like as when I last saw you. How glad I am to once more feel the warm hand-clasp of one of my own kindred, after living so many years among strangers! The sight of your kind face makes me feel at home; and it seems like a dream, the long years that have flown since I last stood in dear old Beachwood: but, alas! I miss the familiar forms of my kind uncle and aunt, and realize that time cannot pass without changes coming to all."

Elena was greatly relieved when she found that Conrad did not avoid her, for her, as she thought, great repulsiveness: but she was over-sensitive, thinking she was much homelier than she really was; for, although her features were irregular, her complexion dark, and her hair coarse, yet when animated her whole face lighted up, her eyes would flash and sparkle, and her really exquisite teeth gleam through the red lips like petals. But unfortunately Elena had overheard her maid Nina and the butler speaking of her, saying, "What a pity our young mistress is so ugly, when she has so much money, and might look so lovely in costly silks and gleaming jewels! And then no man could ever really love her: he would only marry her for her great wealth."

The poor sensitive girl never forgot it, but felt she was set apart from the bevy of marriageable young ladies who lived in the neighborhood; for, if she could not be loved

for herself alone, she never would be the mark of mere fortune-hunters.

"Cousin Conrad, you have been at Beachwood now some two weeks, and it is time you made the acquaintance of some of the neighbors," said Elena to the young man one morning, as he was preparing, as was his custom, to don his hunting-suit before going to the woods, in which he spent most of the day. "You know, coz, you are to settle within a few miles of here; and, if you wish to get practice, you must first visit, and become somewhat acquainted. Come: give up killing the innocent birds, and pass the time more pleasantly by making a conquest of hearts."

"One heart, if it was a true one, and loved me alone, would satisfy me, Ellie," said Conrad.

And for a moment Conrad gazed earnestly at the dark face so near his own. But in a moment the heiress drew up her small but graceful figure, while a look of almost scorn swept over her features; and, sighing, Conrad turned away, saying, —

"I will do as you wish, Ellie. Excuse me for a few moments, and I will be ready to accompany you in your morning calls."

When he reached his own apartment, everything—from the snowy couch, with its flowing lace curtains looped back by bands of coral, the large easy-chair embroidered by the deft and willing fingers, vases filled with flowers rare in color and perfume, to the few choice paintings adorning the tinted walls—showed that he was the object of the loving attention of his cousin.

He threw himself into the easy-chair by the window; and a sad, thoughtful expression took the place of the careless, happy look that his countenance had so lately worn.

"She dislikes me; scorns me for a fortune-hunter; thinks, because I am poor, I want her for her money. She ought to know better; for can she not see, by my every look and action, that I love her? No: she is too modest, too retiring, to think she could ever gain the heart of any one. But then she is so cold and so proud whenever I happen to speak of love, or hint that I care for her. Well, I will not again offend; for she is rich, I am poor: she shall not say that I want her for money."

And the young man, with these bitter thoughts passing through his mind, hasten-

ed to change his dress, and soon thereafter joined his cousin, who was awaiting him in the drawing-room.

After Elena had parted from Conrad, she made a few alterations in her toilet, and, while awaiting his re appearance, she had time to think over his singular conduct.

"He is poor, wants to rise in his profession, and needs money. I have plenty; and he thinks, by tender looks, a few graceful compliments, and so forth, to make me a willing captive. But he is mistaken. Does he think for one moment I am silly enough to imagine he, so handsome, so elegant, and so fascinating, could ever love me, homely and repulsive? But, if he wants money, he shall have it. Let me see: how can I manage? I have it. I will get old lady Emmons, who lives in the stone cottage, and who will do anything for me since I saved her grandchild from drowning last summer, to pretend she needs the services of a physician. She must pay well, for she is reported to be wealthy. Conrad will never know it is my gold he is receiving, and he can have the money without the burden of the heiress."

So Elena arranged everything; and after becoming acquainted, and in a short time after being established, the physician was doing a fine business, not dreaming he owed his first success to his cousin.

Christmas came, with its clear, bracing air, its ermine-crowned fields, and its jewel-laden trees that shone in the sun with all the brilliant colors of the rainbow, while in palace and cottage preparations had been made to celebrate the day and evening with various amusements.

At Beachwood a large party assembled, and the heiress did all in her power to make time pass pleasantly to her guests: but, although her face was wreathed in smiles, her heart was sad within her; for among the attractive young ladies present was one so lovely, so peerless in her beauty, that she seemed the queen rose in this garden of rare human exotics.

Constance Leslie was a near neighbor of Elena's; but, having just left school, the beauty and the heiress met for the first time since childhood at the Christmas *fete*.

What a contrast the two made as they stood side by side in the brilliant ball-room which Elena had caused to be opened and decorated for the pleasure of the numerous company assembled at Beachwood. Elena

was petite, dark, and unattractive; while her toilet was plain, almost strict in its simplicity. Constance, on the contrary, was tall, fair, and very winning in her manner, with a frank, sweet mouth, a look of tender entreaty in the azure eyes, and a shower of golden curls; while dress and jewels were so rich and gorgeous, that she seemed a princess in disguise.

Conrad Alford, with his better nature soured and his heart hardened toward his cousin for her cold, distant manner, and haughty reserve, paid marked attention to the fair blonde; and she, nothing loth, received his admiration with pleasure,—for was he not of an old family? and would he not, in case of his sickly-looking cousin's death, inherit all her wealth? Such were the thoughts of this lovely, innocent-looking girl, as she cast down her eyes, and modestly blushed, when conversing with the physician; and he, easily deceived, as are most men when a deep, designing woman wishes to ensnare them, soon became fascinated, and, in the alluring glances of his new charmer, almost forgot his former love.

So day after day passed, each brighter than the last; then summer came, and still Conrad lingered at Constance Leslie's side. There were boating excursions, when the limpid waters were as calm as a mirror; Constance seated near, looking like a water-sprite in her dainty white robes, and golden hair wreathed with waxen lilies. Then there were long rides, when the horses' hoofs brushed the diamond dew-drops from the waving grass; promenades upon the sun-shaded terrace; and walks when the moon bathed the landscape in a flood of silvery grandeur.

All this time, that was so bright and fair to the lovely Constance and fickle Conrad, Elena—pale, silent, and unhappy—went about like a restless spirit, taking no interest in life, and feeling doubly desolate after the brief sunshine of happiness experienced in Conrad's presence.

The golden radiance of the day had succeeded to the cool shades of the evening. Under the shadow of the noble trees walked Conrad, with the golden-haired siren by his side, who had won him from the pure, noble woman whose heart was filled with the image of her inconstant cousin.

"How fair and spiritual you look in this mystic light, Constance!" said Conrad.

the two passed up and down the green lawn, while the moonlight fell in soft, silvery gleams across the faces of each. "You are perfect in your regal beauty, darling; and I love you, love you madly. Can you return a little of my devotion?"

"Not a little," she said, shaking her head archly: "but very much, all; for I, too, love you, dear Conrad."

So in sweet converse the hours sped. But when Conrad, wending his way home through the silent, star-gemmed night, felt he ought to be wildly happy,—for was not the fair Constance his betrothed wife? and did they not love one another?—yet like some pale phantom there flitted before his memory Elena's sad, reproachful face, and soft, passionate eyes.

"What have I done?" he asked himself. "Have I made a mistake in binding myself to Constance? Can it be that I do not really care for her? If so, why does the image of my cousin haunt me? But, pshaw! Elena, the cold, heartless woman, cares for no one, loves no one; while the innocent, confiding Constance is all affection, all passion. I do, I will, love her: so away with all thoughts of another!"

But, when sleeping, his dreams were all of Elena; and in the morning he awoke filled with vague unhappiness of the coming future.

The years, with their sunshine and shadow, sorrows and gladness, meetings and partings, life and death, passed swiftly away, bringing change to all.

In a dimly lighted room sat a man not over forty years of age, but with dark hair thickly sprinkled with white, the face pale and careworn, while underneath the sad-looking eyes were dark circles, as though resulting from constant watching or silent sorrow.

On a low couch in a corner of the dreary-looking room slept a child,—a fair-haired, delicate boy of six or seven summers. Everything was in confusion, and the man seemed the picture of despair in this scene of desolation and loneliness.

"So, after fifteen years of this wretched life, she has at last deserted me; and, as she states in her note that she left behind, she never loved me, but married thinking I might come into possession of the princely fortune of Beachwood, but despairing of

that, and having at last met with a more congenial spirit, one whom she fondly loved, she had consented to go to a far-off clime, there to live and die, as she hopes, in peace. And this is the last of my wife,—of the beautiful Constance, whom I thought at one time I worshiped."

And, as he spoke, Conrad Alford tore the note into a thousand pieces, and crushed to atoms a miniature of the fair, false face on which he had been gazing.

"And little Harry the heartless woman has left me for a legacy. Deserted husband and child! Well, I am perhaps justly punished for giving up the true for the false; loving Constance for her beauty, when I might have won Elena, with her deep, warm affections, if I had only really known and understood her: for I feel now that she did care for me, and all these years she has never married. I will ask her to take charge of Harry; and I will go far away, will try to forget the wretched past in different lands, among other scenes and strange people."

Again the vine-clad piazza at Beachwood is bathed in the golden glory of a summer sunset. The purple bells of the convolvulus sway gracefully in the evening breeze, birds twitter drowsily in their nests amid the branches of the trees, and on the lawn the shadows deepen as twilight spreads her sable curtain over the earth.

Again, as on that summer night fifteen long years ago, a woman's form is seen standing under the canopy of vines and blossoms; and as Conrad, leading his little boy by the hand, advances up the broad avenue, he can scarcely realize that such a space of time has elapsed, for Elena, seen in the halo of light that enriches her, looks almost as young as at eighteen.

Leading a calm, quiet, secluded life, she has escaped the ruthless hand of the destroyer almost unscathed. The dark hair is just as rich and abundant, the eyes as soft, and the form as graceful, as in youth; and, while she seems just in her prime, Conrad Alford is fast growing to be an old man.

"Elena, I come to you a desolate, deserted, almost heart-broken man. Constance has eloped; has left her child, ruined her husband, and disgraced her name and home. Will you take little Harry as your own, as a gift from me?"

And the wretched father, putting the tiny hand of Harry within that of his cousin, turned away to hide the bitter tears he could not repress.

"Conrad, dear cousin, I pity you; from my heart I pity and sympathize with you. I feared such would be the end: for Constance did not love you as a wife should love her husband; and though being so beautiful, so fond of admiration, she was not content with simple home life, but liked the glitter and false splendors of society. But her punishment will be sad and bitter; so try and forget her. I will do all I can to make little Harry happy. He shall never feel the loss of his mother if I can help it. But what are your plans for yourself?"

And Elena, with a pale face, and with a wistful look in her gray eyes, anxiously awaited a reply.

"I shall be a wanderer, seeking peace, but finding it not. I care not what becomes of me. No one loves me. No one will regret me if I die. I am wretched, seeing nothing in the future but darkness, desolation, and despair."

"O Conrad! it is wicked, unmanly, to talk so. Do not sink beneath this burden; but for your child's sake, for my sake, be brave, and endure. Forget this woman, who has treated you so cruelly. How well you must love her!"

And Elena gazed with painful earnestness into the pale face and tear-dimmed eyes of her cousin.

"Love her! I despise and scorn her. The false, cruel, heartless, mercenary woman! who confessed she married me, thinking I might some time have a fortune. Never speak of her again, Ellie. Oh! let her name never be mentioned again in my presence."

"Will you give up this wild scheme of going away among strangers," asked Elena, "and stay at Beachwood? Do, please, at least for a time, until your wounded heart is healed."

And he consented.

Six months of quiet and happiness at

Beachwood, and Elena, in the company of Conrad and little Harry, regained her former light spirits, while often her sweet voice rang out in merry laughter or in trills of bird-like music.

"You seem as free from care as a child, and look as blooming and youthful as you did ten years ago, while I am an old man," said Conrad.

And he stood admiring Elena, who, in a pretty wrapper, with her dark face radiant, and eyes sparkling and flashing, was arranging a bouquet from the conservatory, and looking the picture of happiness and contentment.

"I am happy once more," she said.

And then she blushed, fearing she had confessed too much.

"Dear Ellie, I am free now. Constance is dead. Will you, at the end of a year, become my wife? I love you; have never loved any one but you. Constance, with her beauty, made me forget you for a time: but I was punished; and now, although fast growing old, my heart is the same. It is yours, darling Ellie, yours: will you accept it?"

"What! you love me, — so ugly, so repulsive?"

"You are not ugly, never was, to me. I loved you from the first, and tried to tell you so; but you were so distant, so cold, I thought you disliked me; so I turned to Constance for consolation, thinking she loved me. But I was punished for being ensnared by beauty. Will you take me, dear Ellie, with all my faults? Can you care for a man who is prematurely old and careworn, but whose whole heart is yours alone?"

"I have loved you, you alone, all these years, and, for the sake of that love, have put away all others from me, living on the memory of the past," said Elena, placing her hand in his.

And brighter and clearer than ever shone her radiant eyes as they looked trustingly into his.

"Then," said Conrad, "at last, after all these dreary years of misery, I am once more happy."

ALARIC'S EXPERIMENT.

BY FRANCES E. WADLEIGH.

"No, Clement, I cannot honestly say I am sorry that Uncle Job bequeathed his estate to me. Money is a very useful article, and I, who have so long struggled with poverty, am the last man to scorn it," said Alaric Warrington to his friend Clement Totterdell, as the two sat smoking in the former's room one balmy evening late in May.

"Then why did you say that you were not sure it was a subject for congratulation?" asked Clement.

"Because I fear it may make me selfish, uncharitable, suspicious" —

"Come, come, Al! That won't do. The idea of you, of all men, becoming an old curmudgeon is preposterous! Why, you would give away your head if it was not fastened on securely. And as for being suspicious, any poor wretch with a long face and a pitiful tale could impose on you, unless you have altered wonderfully in the two years I have been abroad."

"What I meant was — was — it sounds awfully conceited, but I fear this money" —

"Oh! I see: you fear the girls will love you for your purse alone. There is some sense in that, for, now you speak of it, I wondered why Mrs. Robertson had so suddenly become aware of all your excellences. I came on from New York in the same car with her, and eight or ten of her daughters, and she talked of nothing but 'dear Alaric,' and what a fine fellow he was. I had not heard of your windfall, and I confess it puzzled me. How she used to snub us when we were both poor medical students!"

"Perhaps it is foolish, but I cannot forget those slights, now that she, and one or two others, think it advisable to seek my acquaintance. Judge Harvey and Mrs. Lloyd have both begged me to spend the summer with them."

"You are going to do so, of course?"

"Not much! I am going to some quiet country place where no one ever heard of Uncle Job or his money" —

"I say, Al, I have an idea! Let's go to Oak Grove for the summer" —

"Why to Oak Grove? Where is it?"

"It is about fifty miles from Z——: a

great many people went there last summer on account of some very wonderful springs. I heard an American family lauding it to the skies when I was in Rome last Christmas. Neither you nor I know a soul in Z——; so if we were to go there, pretending that I was the wealthy young bachelor, we might have a chance to find out which the Z—— girls prefer, a heavy purse, or good looks and manly accomplishments. What do you say?"

The idea rather pleased Alaric Warrington: even he, who possessed as little vanity as any handsome man of five-and-twenty in all our broad land, could not deny that nature had done more for him than for Clement Totterdell, and he felt a romantic desire to try the experiment suggested in his friend's last words.

"Agreed!" he exclaimed. "You shall have the credit and the full benefit of Uncle Job's money. I will proclaim myself only a young physician, ordered to Oak Grove on account of ill health from too close attention to my studies. That will be no fib either: Dr. Galen told me the very day Uncle Job died that I was working too hard, and must take a rest this summer."

Some quick-witted genius had discovered two or three springs in Oak Grove, whose limpid waters were certainly ill-smelling and nasty tasting enough to be the most valuable medicated drink. Judicious advertising and a discreet use of free tickets from Z—— had made the pretty little village quite a summer resort. Two new hotels had sprung up like Jonah's gourd, and had not our two friends gone thither very early in the season, about the middle of June, both these capacious caravanseries must have turned them away, or stowed them in the attic.

Perhaps it was because Clement was so very particular about their rooms, — perhaps because he, and not Alaric, had an impish little valet who had a grand idea of his master's importance, — or perhaps because the two carriages, the eight or nine horses and their attendants, and the coachman, made their appearance in his name, that the proprietor of the Piute House (the

largest, newest, shiniest of the two large, new, shiny hotels) concluded that he was a young man of boundless wealth, who had come to Oak Grove for the waters, bringing his physician with him.

Such, at any rate, was the tale which spread like wild-fire all through the Piute House the evening that Clement and Alaric arrived there. The only topic of conversation in the parlors that evening was Clement.

"Have you seen the wealthy Mr. Totterdell?" and, "Oh, do tell me if that millionaire who has arrived is married?" were the staple questions of the evening.

The two young men made their first appearance at breakfast the next morning. The young ladies were, at first, somewhat disappointed to learn that the tall, broad-shouldered, graceful man, with curling brown hair, silken mustache, and soft, velvety brown eyes, that seemed capable of saying more than any other man's lips, was "only" Dr. Warrington; and that the reputed millionaire was he who stood scarcely five feet ten in his boots, was unfortunate enough to have ordinary dark-brown, almost black, hair, guiltless of wave or curl, mustache and beard of the same hue, and gray eyes, — in short, was not the sort of young man a girl ever "raves" over on account of his looks, although he was by no means a bad-looking fellow.

Among the summer boarders at the Piute House were Mrs. Reiling, her daughter Camilla, and her niece Bessie Purviance, from Philadelphia, and Mrs. Burston and her niece Jenny, from New York. These ladies occupied rooms on the same floor and seats at the same table, hence they had become tolerably well acquainted in the ten days which had elapsed since their simultaneous arrival.

"Look!" exclaimed Jenny Burston, as Alaric and "the millionaire" entered the room the morning after their arrival. "There are the strangers; the tall one is the doctor, and the other one is Mr. Totterdell."

"How do you know?" asked Camilla.

"I asked our worthy landlord to describe them to me a little while ago, and he said, 'Mr. Totterdell a'n't no great for looks, — kind o' short and dark, — but the doctor now is a powerful handsome fellow, and nigh onto two inches taller than I be.' So now I know which is which."

"I hope we will get introduced to them. Jenny, you're smart, can't you contrive it?" suggested Mrs. Burston, in her harsh, unpleasant voice.

"Don't you bother your head, Aunt Mary, it will be all right," replied Jenny, shortly.

Jenny Burston could be very agreeable; for the first few days Mrs. Reiling liked her, and pitied her for being tied to such an uncultivated woman as Mrs. Burston, but now and then the girl would utter some piece of coarse slang, some unlady-like sentiment, or would be unwarrantably rude and cross to her aunt, and then Mrs. Reiling would determine to associate with her as little as possible.

The three girls attracted the attention of Clement and Alaric: they had come to the Piute well recommended, so before night-fall they had made the acquaintance of the young ladies and their *chaperones*.

Mrs. Reiling was not a mercenary woman: she had a handsome fortune in her own right, and needed not to angle for a rich husband for her only daughter. She was, however, very willing that Camilla should receive the various attentions that Clement offered her; and when she came to know him well, and see that his reputed wealth was by no means the only virtue or attraction he possessed, she allowed herself to erect some castles in the air, with him as their corner-stone.

The glorious summer days went by all too quickly for some of the transient denizens of Oak Grove. Rides, drives, picnics, croquet parties, boating, fishing, dancing, filled up the sunny days, and the dewy, perfumed nights. Clement Totterdell was in his glory: no young lady but thought herself honored by his smiles, no matron but paid him *court* on behalf of some fair charge; and he, laughing in his sleeve, accepted all their homage gravely, and gave himself as many airs as if he had been all their fancy painted him.

Alaric, too, was enjoying himself. His good looks, his value as a fine dancer, a perfect oarsman, and a more than tolerably good musician, made a great acquisition to Oak Grove society; nevertheless, he fully realized that he was by no means the beau, the eligible, that Clement was. Bessie Purviance and Jenny Burston were really the only two girls who appeared to prefer his society to Clement's. Of these two Bessie

was decidedly his favorite, but he saw less of her than of Jenny. Bessie was penniless, and her aunt, thinking it her duty to see that she made a good marriage, did all she could to keep her out of Alaric's way.

"I must act a mother's part to her," Mrs. Reiling said to Mrs. Leonard, one day when the latter lady had intimated that Bessie seemed to admire the young doctor. "If she were wealthy, now, it would be different, for Dr. Warrington is undoubtedly a very fine young man; but I cannot allow her to sacrifice herself this year for romance, and next year blame me for her misery."

"What a pity he had not a part of his friend's property!"

"Yes, it is a pity," said Mrs. Reiling, honestly; "but of course I cannot force Bessie and Mr. Totterdell to fancy one another simply because the one's lack of gold is complemented by the other's superfluity."

"I presume the Burstons are in easy circumstances. Miss Jenny and the doctor are certainly having a fine flirtation, and Mrs. Burston apparently approves of it. She does not look like a girl who would appreciate love in a cottage."

"No; a brown-stone front would be a fitter residence for the blind god, in her estimation. But perhaps I am unjust. I do not like the girl, and yet I hardly dare say so, for fear people will think I am jealous of her beauty. She certainly outshines Camilla and Bessie."

Mrs. Reiling spoke truthfully. Her daughter and niece were graceful, well-bred, sweet-voiced girls of nineteen and twenty; their hair, matching to a shade, was the color of a ripe chestnut; their eyes, true, honest gray; their feet and hands well formed, but neither too large nor too small. They were both of the type that does not always shine the brightest in the ball-room, but reserves its brilliance for home life. They were as well versed in kitchen lore as in science, politics, music, and art. In short, they were born to be loving daughters, idolized wives, and tender mothers. Can praise be greater?

Jenny Burston was cast in a different mould: taller than either Camilla or Bessie, she was also more stylish in appearance and dress. Her hair was golden, — very golden, — luxuriant, and always fashionably dressed; her complexion was excellent — Bessie and Camilla whispered "rouge and Bloom of Youth," when in the secrecy of their

own rooms; her eyes were blue, and her eyelashes and eyebrows several shades darker than her hair. But even Camilla and Bessie could not accuse her of coloring these. She liked Dr. Warrington's society, and thought it no shame to evince her preference openly. He was her companion in rides and walks, and her partner in the ball-room. If he did not seek her, she did not hesitate to seek him, in a delicate, lady-like way, and he never repelled her advances.

One warm August evening there had been a dance on the lawn in front of the Piute House. The full moon gave light to the dancers, and, while bathing them in her intoxicating radiance, almost stole away the senses of one or two of them. It is a way fair Luna has: she is responsible for thousands of whispered love words, stolen kisses, lovers' vows, as changeful as herself!

"By Jove, Al!" exclaimed Clement, late that night, when the two were alone, "I have done an awfully shabby thing. I ought to have known better, but I did n't stop to think."

"What have you done now?" asked Alaric, who had been wondering, somewhat sadly, why Bessie Purviance persisted in avoiding him on all occasions.

"I've gone and made a fool of myself about Miss Camilla Reiling, forgetting that I have n't a dollar to call my own. I ought to be hung!"

"Proposed to her, you mean?"

"No, thank Heaven! I succeeded in stopping short of that madness, though I came awfully near it. I have been fool enough to fall head and ears in love with her; and, as of course I can't marry on nothing a year, I must pack up, and be off before my midsummer madness completely masters me."

"Do you think she cares?" —

"I don't know," answered Clement, hastily, the tell-tale blood dyeing his honest face a brilliant crimson. "I did n't ask — of course not! Only I must get away before she — for fear" —

"Yes, yes, I see!" answered Alaric. "Our little plan has worked finely; you have proved the efficacy of gold, and I — have played second fiddle!"

"You forget Miss Jenny!"

"No, I don't. Exceptions prove the rule! She and her aunt are the only unmercenary people here. I, at least have found one honest heart," answered Alaric.

"You have been very attentive to her, Al; nothing serious, I hope?"

"N—o, not yet. I don't know as I can do better than to offer myself, for, if she likes me at all, it is for myself, and not for my money."

"I wish it was Miss Purviance, Al!"

"So do I. But she is too well-trained, her aunt is too watchful, to let the poor young doctor steal even a moiety of her affections," answered Alaric, bitterly.

"I am not so sure about that. I have several times fancied"—

"It was only fancy! Did she, or her aunt for her, ever refuse to row, drive, or dance with you? When you send flowers to her, or her cousin, do they ever fail to wear a knot of them? No, Clement. My good looks may please the young lady's eye, but—I am poor, they think. I have tried the experiment of balancing gold and love, and I am sure that the former is the more weighty."

"You do not think of marrying Miss Burston, do you? You are not in earnest surely?"

"I shall offer myself to her before I leave"—

"You must not. You know you love Miss Bessie!"

Alaric turned crimson, but neither confessed nor denied; he continued, —

"If Miss Burston accepts me, I shall, in the presence of all our friends here, explain how I came to be sailing under false colors, and let those Mammon-worshippers see what a blunder they have made."

"Don't be rash, Alaric! As for me, I must go home tomorrow morning"—

"Not tomorrow, Clement. You forget that you have invited a large party to a moonlight dance on Emerald Island. Wait until the day after, and we will go together."

The moonlight dance on Emerald Island was a thing to be remembered. The lawn in front of the rustic cottage on that charming islet was as smooth and soft as if each spear of grass had been laid in its place by fairy fingers; the cottage, the tiny grove at its rear, the banner-draped stand for the musicians, and the refreshment tent, were brilliantly illuminated by hundreds of gay-colored Chinese lanterns. The night was balmy, and the sky cloudless; the full moon sailed through the blue vault in brilliant grandeur.

Clement, in his capacity as host, was indefatigable and impartial in his attentions. He danced the first waltz with Bessie, the second with Jenny, and the third with Jessica Rogers; the plainest, most unattractive girl present; then he requested the honor of Camilla's hand, but she was engaged for half a dozen dances by this time, and, vexed at his unusual neglect, was not sorry that such was the case. She treated him with affected indifference, and the two did not meet until their faces were turned homeward.

Alaric had sent Jenny Burston, that morning, a very beautiful bouquet; accompanying it was a note much more tender in its tone than usual, and signed, "Your true lover, Alaric." Both note and flowers were triumphantly exhibited to Bessie in less than ten minutes after they were received; and, coupled with Alaric's devotion to Jenny on the island, spoiled Bessie's pleasure for the evening; for, in spite of her aunt's warnings and watchings, she had given her whole heart to the handsome young doctor.

Jenny Burston was a very careless young lady; if there was a nail, a splinter, or a thorn within six feet, she was sure to tear some of her numerous ruffles or flounces; and so it happened this evening. She wore a delicate blue organdy muslin, and while waltzing was unfortunate enough to whisk her voluminous skirt over a plank in the musicians' stand, and tear the lower flounce half way off.

Summoning her aunt to her aid, she retired to the cottage, to repair the damage as well as pins could do it. Alaric saw her as she went through the brightly lighted doorway, and threw himself down on a bench on the porch to await her return. Unknown to himself or to Jenny, he had chanced to sit close to the open window of the dressing-room, and, Jenny's voice being rather loud, overheard the following conversation:—

"Dear me, Jane, you are the carelesst girl! You tear every rag you put on your back. Here's this span new organdy just ruined!" said Mrs. Burston.

"Oh, confound the old thing!" answered Jenny, sharply. "Who cares? When I am Mrs. Warrington I won't wear any such flimsy trash as this, you may bet your life on it!"

"Has he proposed yet?"

"No, but he's been awful spoony; I'll lead him up to the scratch before we go

home. But just think how mad that Reiling crowd will be when the cat is out of the bag! They've snubbed Warrington, and run after Totterdell, in such a public way, that it will be an awful blow when they find what a trick those fellows are playing!"

"Totterdell is in love with Camilla evidently."

"Yes, and she with him. That little Bessie Purviance is just dead in love with Warrington, although she really believes that he is poor. You ought to have seen her face when I showed her Al's note this morning! Did n't you see how red her eyes were at dinner-time? Never mind; they'll be redder yet when she finds that the money is his, and he is mine. Do hurry, Ann, — you are the pokiest thing!"

I dare say it was very dishonorable in Alaric Warrington to listen quietly to the above, but he did it. Then, rising quietly, with a smile on his face, he turned his footsteps toward Mossy Spring, about a dozen yards back of the cottage, where Bessie Purviance was sitting, listening to the strains of music from the band, to the cricket's melancholy chirp, and the solemn croak of some invisible frogs. In spite of the gayety around her, her heart was very heavy, and her eyes were suspiciously bright.

"Is this Miss Purviance? or is it some fair dryad to whom all these fire-flies are paying homage?" said Alaric, suddenly.

"O Dr. Warrington, how you startled me! I did not hear you coming," answered Bessie.

"Then, as you are Miss Purviance, and not a dryad, why are you here in solitary state? It is cruel in you to leave your partners desolate," said Alaric, seating himself on a smooth stone near her.

"I might answer your question, Yankee fashion, by asking another: why have you deserted your partners?"

"I came in search of you."

"Nonsense!"

"Yes, I did, honor bright!"

"You did n't know I was here."

"But I did though! You slipped away from your cousin about ten minutes ago. I was watching you. Do you think I fail to know your whereabouts?"

Alaric's tone brought a blush to Bessie's cheek, and a smile to her lip. She exclaimed, —

"What a lovely night! and what a bewitching scene! It is like fairy-land."

"Yes, thanks to Clement's gold. Money is the only thing worth having, isn't it?" sighed Alaric.

"No!" said Bessie, emphatically, half frightened at her own temerity. "It will not always buy happiness — nor love."

"Not always, perhaps. But suppose, for instance, I had Clem's wealth, and were to say to you, 'Miss Bessie' —"

"I never suppose!"

"Then let me say it without Clem's advantages! If you tried, Bessie, dear, could you love me a little?" I have wanted to ask you this many a time, but you always avoided me, and I feared that you saw how I loved you, and wanted to discourage me. Is it so? Am I?" —

"You think I am Jenny Burston, and — and" —

"Hang Jenny Burston!" exclaimed Alaric, pressing Bessie's hand in his, and stealing his arm around her supple waist. "You know better! Bessie, darling, can you love me?"

"I — I don't know. Aunt Anna" —

"Never mind Aunt Anna. Look up and tell me."

Bessie glanced up in her lover's face, and he read his answer in her happy eyes. Bending down, he kissed her tenderly, and whispered — But a lover's words are sacred.

"Al! Al!" cried Clement. "Where are you?"

So the delightful *tete a tete* was interrupted.

In a few moments Alaric found himself at liberty to seek Mrs. Reiling. Finding her in the midst of a bevy of girls, he offered her his arm, and asked her to go with him and get an ice. Startled by an undefinable something in his tone, she did so, and as soon as they were out of hearing of the rest, he said, —

"Mrs. Reiling, Clement and I owe you a thousand apologies; we have been deceiving you. But I am the only one to blame: Clem is honor itself!"

"What do you mean? Pray explain," she said.

"Why, the truth is that Clement and I are here under false colors. The wealth for which he is worshiped is mine, and he is the poor doctor," answered Alaric, explaining how and why he pretended to be poor. "This would not be so bad, but that Clement has lost his heart — as true and honest

a one as ever beat! — to your daughter. Of course, under the circumstances, he will go away at once" —

"Why?" said Mrs. Reiling, coolly. "Is he married or betrothed?"

"No, indeed! But he has nothing but his practice, and Miss Camilla" —

"Now Dr. Warrington!" said Mrs. Reiling, laughing, "I think if I were Clement I would consult Camilla herself before I went away in such a hurry."

"Do you really mean it? May I tell him so?"

"If you choose. If Clement had fancied poor Bessie now, who has nothing" —

"But who, with your permission, dear madam, will have all that I possess! No, no! I can't resign her to Clement."

Supper was served in a roomy tent that gave every one an opportunity to sit comfortably down by the table. The viands were rich, rare, and abundant, and both young and old did justice to them. Presently Alaric rose, and said, —

"Ladies and gentlemen, I propose a toast to our host. May his future life be richer in true happiness than his past or present has been in gold or silver."

The toast was drank, though more than one fair guest wondered not a little thereat. Finding that no explanation was volunteered, Lizzie Carroll exclaimed, —

"Either I am very stupid, Dr. Warrington, or your words have a hidden meaning. Which is it?"

"The latter, the latter, Miss Carroll. How can you suggest that *you* are stupid?"

"Pray explain the mystery."

"I will do so — by proxy. Miss Burston, will you be good enough to do so for me?"

Jenny Burston started at these words. Turning first red, then pale, to the secret astonishment of all present, she stammered, —

"I — I — really I don't know what you mean."

"Oh, yes, you do. Pray tell our friends who is the poor doctor and who the wealthy young eligible. Both Clement and I are bashful, and as you and your aunt are the only ones here in the secret, I must insist that you come to my aid."

Both Jenny and Mrs. Burston were ghastly pale. Clement divined from their

looks that Alaric had a good reason for his request, so he added, —

"Yes, Miss Burston, pray oblige me too."

"There is no mystery," said Jenny, hesitatingly.

"No mystery? Am I a poverty-stricken physician? Is Clem rolling in riches? Come, you are unkind!"

"How did you know that I — What do you mean?" said Jenny.

"Well, if Miss Burston will not tell, I must," said Alaric, proceeding to explain to the assembled guests.

Clement said nothing. He looked uneasily at Mrs. Reiling, but she gave him a knowing, re-assuring nod that spoke volumes. He glanced at Camilla; she looked surprised, but not in the least displeased, so he concluded that it was not so bad, after all.

This disclosure caused a great deal of talk at Oak Grove, of course. Some people blamed Clement severely, but the majority laughed pleasantly, and considered the affair a very good joke. Mrs. Reiling was congratulated upon the good fortune that awaited her penniless niece, and also (by the truly honest) upon her prospective son-in-law; for Camilla and Clement, sitting side by side in the boat on their way home from Emerald Island that night, had thus settled their own future.

The Burstons left Oak Grove early the next day. For a long time it was a mystery to Alaric and Clement how these two perfect strangers had heard of their intended visit to Oak Grove under false pretences, but at last it was explained. Alaric's lawyers, Messrs. Juris and Legis, had a young clerk named Brown, whose only sister Jenny, a handsome girl, was determined to marry money; the young clerk learned all the particulars of Alaric's wealth and romantic plan for the summer, and, of course, gave his sister a hint of the matter. Jenny, who had about three thousand dollars, took an old friend into her confidence, and the two, laying in a good supply of finery, went to Oak Grove as Mrs. and Miss Burston, with the full intention of conquering young Warrington and his money, cost what it might to either purse or conscience. But woman proposed, and man disposed, as often happens.

ALLAN'S ADVENTURE.

BY MARY A. ALDEN.

Autumn foliage floated broadly and beautifully over the land, and cool evenings crowned dusky days with stars and a crescent. *The morning showed white and glittering under the late-risen sun, across whose smile the breath of winter crept coldly.*

A time when eager youth sets forth into the world, careless of experience that so easily "conceals every thorn," as it beckons into the future.

Allan Aytoun was no exception to the generality of youth in the estimate of his own wisdom in meeting life, and his knowledge of it. He stood before the little garden-gate of his country home, smiling grandly, nevertheless lovingly, upon his mother and his sister, who showered kisses and advice upon him in return. He was waiting for the omnibus which was to start him on his journey to the great city, with which a winter or two had already made him familiar, but whence he had ever returned to his proud mother noble and respected, however much he might have gained in a certain pompousness of manner, — the result of a varied experience.

Henry, his young brother, romping with the great, black Newfoundland, Pluto, gazed with jealous awe upon his senior, — taking heart, however, at the thought that he, too, should some day step from the threshold of home into the great, busy world.

The rumbling coach bore off its precious burden. The mother wipes a tear from her

eye as she enters the house; the sister leans on the gate, and gazes pensively down the road; Pluto and Henry are running a race after the fast-receding coach.

As the weeks go by, pleasant letters come from Allan, and the little home-circle look for them as their dearest entertainment; so that when they cease to come as often as at first the want of them throws a shadow across the genial faces that bend so eagerly over them.

"No letter!"

It was Allan's sister who spoke, with a rueful countenance, as the coach rattled by, dropping no precious missive.

"What can it mean, Grace?" asked the mother anxiously. "We have never waited as long as this. Had you not better write? I fear he may be sick."

"Wait one more day," said Grace, "and then if we do not hear we will telegraph to the careless reprobate. To judge from his last letters, I should suspect an *affaire de cœur*. He has talked of nothing but Ma'm'selle Lascours, the French danseuse, for weeks and weeks. I presume if we are fortunate enough to receive a letter tomorrow it will only prove an elaborate catalogue of her beauty and her graces."

But the letter, when it came, did not mention the lovely actress. It was a brief demand for money; a request, rather, that a roll of bills that had been amassing in a private drawer of Allan's for some dear, home purpose should be sent to him.

The money was sent, with the usual home gossip, and, although Grace wondered, and her mother pondered, they neither of them questioned Allan's purposes, relying on him as trustingly to manage his own as their affairs, — in all of which they were accustomed to appeal to him. But when, from time to time, more urgent letters for money were received, and permission sent to sell Pluto to some gentleman who had long desired in vain to obtain him, then, indeed, there was consternation.

Sell Pluto! Whoever heard of anything so preposterous!

Mrs. Aytoun sent money of her own, with an earnest entreaty that her son would confide in her, and lessen her anxiety, caused by his constant demand for funds, and lack of interest in home events.

Not receiving an immediate reply to her letter, she determined to go to him. Grace willfully declared that she should not go alone, so Henry found himself, with Pluto, an occupant of a neighboring relative's hospitable mansion.

Mrs. Peter Prynn was full of righteous sympathy, and was also just a trifle censorious.

"This comes of Cousin Sophy's certainty of Allan's perfection. She never seemed to think him human; but now" —

She shook her head, and waited to continue her soliloquy until Henry and her youngest son lay planning under the bed-clothes schemes of glory when they, too, should become pecuniarily involved, — and even going to such extents as parting with a faithful Pluto.

Hetty Prynn listened demurely, and said she thought it ridiculous for Allan's mother to go to him as if he were a little boy. Why should n't he flirt with a French danseuse, and spend money? It was just like him. She did n't care. And breaking the eye to her needle, she saved snapping her thread, which she must otherwise have done.

But the thought of ridicule never occurred to Allan's mother, nor to Grace, nor to the reprobate himself. He was filled with delight on receiving them, and, after a series of warm embraces, sat down, looking as fresh and untroubled as on the autumn morning he had left them; so that, at first, the change that care and excitement had rendered visible in his face was imperceptible. But when alone with him that night, before he left her for his lodgings, his moth-

er with her searching gaze fathomed trouble and doubt and feverish expectation.

"Unburden your heart to me, Allan; it is for that that I have undertaken this long journey."

Allan blushed, and looked irresolute.

"I am about to confess myself an idiot," he said.

"Remember who your confessor is, and have no fear," she said, stroking his head, which he had leaned against her shoulder.

"I am a victim," said Allan, "of an infatuation of which I am half ashamed, and for which I fear you will condemn me. Perhaps you remember all the absurdities my letters contained about the pretty little danseuse, Ma'm'selle Desiree Lascours. When I utter that name, my story is told. She bewitches me. Mother, you and Grace must see her. Tomorrow she performs. I have purchased a set of silver ornaments, and sent them to her, and I am impatient to know if she will wear them."

"My son!"

A grieved astonishment betrayed itself in Mrs. Aytoun's voice.

"I know you think me extravagant, mother," said Allan fretfully; "and so it would have seemed to me once. But if one lives in Rome, you know" —

Mrs. Aytoun was silent. She saw Allan was completely mastered by what he termed an infatuation. She resolved to go with him the following evening, and judge for herself of the merits of Ma'm'selle Lascours.

Grace, who wisely asked no questions, gladly attended the performance, and agreed with her mother that the fair enchantress was in truth capable of attracting feminine admiration even. No wonder Allan's heart had softened under the repeated, radiant smile. And when, on this evening of all others, she turned toward him, and, with a graceful motion, touched the silver japonica resting in her hair, his own smile rivaled hers in sweetness.

"Well, mother?" he asked, with triumphant interrogation, when they found themselves together alone; — Grace having exhausted her encomiums, and left them.

"Not ill," said Mrs. Aytoun. "But, after all, Allan, what is this ma'm'selle to you but a passing object of admiration? What more can she, or could she possibly, become?"

"You speak of her slightlying, mother;

but I—I feel sure if I could know her, if my poor attentions will only succeed in gaining her acquaintance, that—that—perhaps she would like me,—knowing me.”

Mrs. Aytoun regarded her son with a slight touch of scornful sadness hovering in the indulgent smile about her lips.

“I think, Allan,” she said, speaking seriously and kindly, “that a nearer acquaintance with Ma’m’selle Lascours would give you that command of yourself which you seem to lack. Remember, you have only seen her on the stage.”

Allan himself now grew scornful.

“It could not alter her angelic smile,—it shines through all the tinsel and the show. O mother! I am sure there could be no disappointment.”

To prove Allan’s statement, Mrs. Aytoun determined, if possible, to gain the acquaintance of Ma’m’selle Lascours. Accordingly, the next day, Allan despatched, with an exquisite bouquet of flowers, a note entreating the acquaintance of Ma’m’selle Lascours, who had deigned to wear his ornaments, and begging an introduction for his mother, his sister, and himself. The answer to this note he awaited with all due impatience.

This answer would probably never have met any eye but his own, not even his mother’s, had not the letter fallen into Grace’s hands.

She went to his lodgings for a book which she had left there, and finding the letter waiting, took it in her pocket to give it to him, supposing they should meet at dinner, before he returned to his rooms. In this supposition she was right; but, alas! the letter lay forgotten in her pocket, and, as Allan forbore to speak of it,—although it was the chief object of his thoughts,—it was not forthcoming until night, when, paying his evening visit to his mother and sister, Allan complained dejectedly that his offering and advances had received a slight. Then Grace bethought herself of the letter in her pocket, and hastily brought it to the light. The writing was in a free, masculine hand, but the envelope bore the mark of the theatre whence it had been sent.

“From the lovely Lascours,” said Grace, “thanking you for your gift. Some other lover wrote the address, probably. Either he is confident of his position, or devoid of jealousy.”

Allan held the letter in his hand, regarding the writing with dismay. His impulse had been to rush away with the missive to his lodgings, and devour the contents there in solitude; but the suspicion of another lover, confirmed by the address, decided him to open it where he stood: by the mantel, in the full blaze of the gaslight.

Suddenly he flung the letter from him, after crushing it in his hand, and trod it under his foot.

“Allan, my son,” cried Mrs. Aytoun, rising from her seat, and approaching him with a distressed and compassionate countenance, “Allan!”

He groaned, hiding his face in his hands, while Grace, terrified and wondering, regarded him with dilating eyes.

“The low-born creature!” she exclaimed; “what has she dared to say to you?”

“Is it from Ma’m’selle Lascours?” asked Mrs. Aytoun, stooping, and picking up the trampled note. “May I read it?”

Allan only bowed his head a little lower, in misery of wounded pride. His mother read the motion as assent, and her eyes glanced carefully over the following:—

“DEAR MADAM:—for your fine riting betrays you are a woman as I am a man. You have discovered the trick and had a rite of coarse to trick me in turn, for I spose you are the mighty pretty girl that sat with you and the other lady the other evening when I wore your silver and acknowledged the same. I *should* like the pleasure of your acquaintance very much only I am going away soon and nothing might come of it after all. I’ve bin playing make believe the other sex so long I might n’t know what to say fancy, ef I had the chance. Ef you regret partin’ with the silver you ken have it back again as I have quantities of trinkets, and aint going to be M’amselle Lascours or anybody else after some few weeks longer, and am glad as it makes most of my lovers awful mad when they git wind of the joak.

Adoringly,

“JACK JERRIMAN, alias

“M’AMSELLE DESIREE LASCOURS.”

Allan’s mother fairly stared after perusing this singular epistle.

“Somebody wrote it,” she said.

“Of course they did!” said Allan. “It’s the”—And Allan shook his head, incapable of further utterance.

"Hush-sh!" and his mother's hand closed over his mouth. "Depend upon it, Allan, this is the work of some idle wag. You will hear from Ma'm'selle Lascours tomorrow."

"Tomorrow!" said Allan, starting up fiercely.

And, despite his mother's caution, and Grace's entreaties, he departed in search of the scoundrel who had cheated him, or the woman whose neglect had proved so sore a trial to his pride and patience.

While he was gone, Grace read the letter, and, though full of indignation and chagrin for Allan's sake, nevertheless found in it a fund of amusement that would last her many a day. It was late when Allan returned, and her laughing blue eyes sobered at once on beholding him.

"Oh, dear!" she exclaimed. "The hateful creature! What did she say to you, Allan?"

"*She!*" exclaimed Allan, in a voice of

thunder. "It 's true, I tell you. I saw *him*, the rascal! I'll sue him, or the theatre, or somebody. Ugh!"

And Allan ground his teeth, poor fellow, suffering a thousand torments in the bitterness of his wounded pride. A year later, perhaps, he would laugh with Grace at the comicality of his situation; but now, the thing desirable was a secrecy profound and silent, and on this they all agreed.

And Mrs. Peter Pryn?

She believed Allan saved by his mother's intrepidity from falling a prey to some low-born dancing-girl, — believed him saved for his own and Hetty's future happiness. For Hetty was growing prettier every day, and charmed Allan with her prettiness and piquancy when once again he returned to the enjoyment of his home, a wiser man and humbler; humble enough to beg Pluto's pardon, if the unsuspecting dog could have granted it, knowing the wrong that had been done him.

ALL 'S FAIR IN WAR.

BY W. H. MACY.

My grandfather, like most old sailors, was fond of recalling the incidents of his active life, and spinning them into yarns, for the delight of us youngsters. I have thought, since I grew older, that the dear old man may have embellished them a little, or at least that, as the phrase goes, a story lost nothing in his telling. I try to remember, as nearly as I can, his account of how he was taken prisoner by the British letter-of-marque, which he always declared was strictly true.

When the war with England broke out in 1812, I was round Cape Horn, on my second voyage as boat-steerer, in the old "Belinda," or "B'lindy," as she was generally called, with Captain Hezekiah Starbuck. Of course we heard about the war, and a great many wild rumors about the British naval fleets coming round into the Pacific, and British privateers fitting out from the Spanish main to cruise for Yankee prizes on the whaling-grounds; but we never knew how much to believe or disbelieve of these wild stories. So we kept steadily about our business, which was to fill the "Belinda" with sperm oil, though we knew we must take a fearful hazard in trying to run the gantlet of the enemy's cruisers on our passage home.

Well, the old ship was getting deep in the

water with her greasy cargo, and wanted only three hundred barrels to fill her up, when we found ourselves one fine morning in sight of Charles's Island, one of the Galapagos, and soon after lowered away for whales, of which many were in sight within a circle of a few miles. I belonged to the larboard boat, which was commanded by Absalom Hussey, our chief mate, a man of great resolution, immense physical strength, and a temper which, when roused, carried all before it. We got separated from the other boats, and fastened to a lively forty-barrel bull, which carted us away several miles to leeward before the mate got a good fatal lance at him; but at last the victory was ours, and our whale turned his broadside up to the sun, while our hurrahs rent the air.

There was a ship in sight, heading on a wind directly at us, but this was rather a pleasant circumstance. He was a whaler, of course, and we felt the true whaleman's delight in aggravating our rivals by a show of our good luck. So we cut a hole in the whale's nib, and, coiling our line down all ready for streaming, we had nothing more to do but wait for the "Belinda" to run down to us. She was still keeping her luff, as the captain and second mate were fast to another whale, which had run to windward. We were all sitting or lounging at our ease

in the boat, watching the strange ship as she rapidly neared us.

"Does n't look like any Nantucket or Bedford ship that I know," said Absalom, as he stood up on the stern-sheets and straightened his gigantic frame to its full height. "I thought I knew about all the ships on the ground, but this one is a stranger, a new-comer. She has got some oil, though, by the looks of her waist."

"It seems to me," said I, "that her bows and head have rather a British look."

"Just so," asserted the giant, with his eyes steadily and keenly fixed upon her. "And the holst of her topsails don't look natural for any Yankee whaler. I think I can see quarter-galleries when she yaws a little; and — yes, by thunder! I can see ports. But she may be an old man-of-war turned into a whaler. Ports and whale-boats don't belong together in any of our country's ships, nohow."

"Well," I observed, "it does n't matter much, anyway. Even if she is an English whaler, we need n't trouble ourselves, I suppose. There's room enough in the Pacific Ocean for both of us to pursue our business without quarreling."

"So there is," answered the mate; "but I have n't much opinion of John Bull's politeness when he thinks all the advantages are on his side. He may take it into his noddle to steal our whale, and say all's fair in war-time. And, if he is the strongest, we can't help ourselves."

As the ship drew near us, we could see that she was much larger than any of our Nantucket whalers, and had six ports on each side, with guns mounted in some of them at least. But her mastheads were manned after the usual manner of whalers, and there were no more men to be seen on her deck than might have belonged to any four-boat ship. On she came, altering her course just enough to run clear of our whale, and the captain, standing on the quarter-rail, saluted us with, —

"Boat ahoy! What ship are you from?"

"The 'B'indy,' of Nantucket," roared Absalom Hussey. "What ship is tha?"

"The 'Allahabad,' of London," was the answer. "Cast off from your whale, and come alongside when I luff to."

"What?" demanded our mate, doubtful of his own ears.

"Leave your whale, and come alongside!" was called again, louder than before.

"Can't stop!" yelled Absalom. "Much obliged t' ye all the same."

By this time the ship had passed us so far that the skipper used his speaking-trumpet to repeat his order.

"If you don't come alongside, I'll open fire upon you!"

"Fire, and be hanged!" shouted our Hercules, in a voice that must have been heard on board, for it was louder than the trumpet's hail.

"Now what sort of a mean trick is he up to? For I don't s'pose this is a friendly invitation, though I thought it was the first time he spoke. The 'Alley' — What did he say her name was?"

"Allahabad," said I. "It's an East-Indian name."

"Well, he's more than an East or a West Injun himself if he means to play any piratical tricks upon me. Hollo! his helm's down, and jib-sheets flying! Going in stays!"

"Yes, sir," said I. "He's coming for us. If we cast off now, and pull right up to windward, we can pass his bows, though we may not escape a shot, if he's wicked enough to fire at us."

"Won't do it," said Absalom stubbornly. "I'll stay where I am, and see it out. He's got guns enough to blow us sky-high, whether we stay here or try to run away."

The Englishman tacked, and came along a little to windward of us, the captain standing on the rail as before, and at his side a man with a musket in his hand. At a wave of the captain's trumpet, the main-top-sail was thrown in aback, deadening the ship's way.

"Come alongside, or I'll fire at you!"

"Fire away, if you're mean enough!" retorted Mr. Hussey.

He had hardly spoken, when the report followed, and the mate, clapping his hand upon his left arm, sang out, —

"I'm hit! The sneaking cowards!"

"They're coming for us!" said I; for two boats were in the act of being lowered from the ship. "Are you hurt much?"

"No," he answered sullenly. "Nothing serious. Give me the boat's spade, and I will cut some of — But, no: it's of no use fighting against such odds."

With a few strokes of the oars, the two English boats closed upon us; and, seeing how hopeless it was to resist, we submitted.

Our captors did not take the whale in

tow, but left him, that he might be more easily found.

Absalom Hussey jumped in upon the quarter-deck of the "Allahabad" as if he had been a boarding-officer, come to take possession, instead of a prisoner-of-war.

He hailed Captain Sinclair in a voice of thunder.

"What does all this mean? Would you shoot a man in cold blood, and then steal his whale?"

Captain Sinclair was a short, stout Englishman, with a quick, business-like manner, and a silky, persuasive voice.

"All 's fair in love and war," he answered carelessly. "Brace full at once, Mr. Derby, and board the main tack! Suppose you have heard, Mr. — what may your name be? — that your country and mine are in a state of war. I am on a whaling voyage myself, but I carry letters of marque, giving me full authority to capture the enemy wherever I may find him on the high seas, and to burn, sink, or destroy as I may see fit. I can't stop to pick up your whale now, for I want your ship first. Pack all sail upon her, Mr. Derby, and have the guns loaded ready for service. You had better go to the surgeon, Mr. American, and have your wound attended to at once. I hope it's not serious."

"No: it is n't serious," returned Absalom. "But no thanks to *you* for that. You may call yourself a letter-of-marque, or a privateer, or what not, but *I* say you're no better than a pirate and a murderer!"

"Don't chafe, friend," said the English captain. "You'll not be ill-treated, if you just keep your temper, and submit to the fortunes of war. My business now is to get possession of the 'Belinda.' She has hauled her other whale alongside, and will put her helm up directly to run down for you. Mr. Derby! set the Yankee flag at the peak."

Our giant, though a man of wonderful powers of endurance, found the flesh wound so painful, that he went to the doctor and had the ball extracted. But as soon as the arm was bound up, he returned to the deck, where, with all the rest of us, he watched the proceedings with the keenest interest.

Our little ship, the "Belinda," was coming down before the moderate trade-wind; but, having a whale towing in the fluke-rope alongside, her rate of sailing was quite slow.

Meanwhile, the "Allahabad," with the

stars and stripes flying as a decoy, and her guns shotted for action, held her course sharp on a wind, and it was evident that when she tacked she would have the weather-gauge. The English mates and crew were already rubbing their hands in eager anticipation of a prize, and laughing at the idea of the green Yankee running down to put himself right into their hands.

But it was evident that Absalom Hussey did not share in their opinion. "Let them laugh that win," said he. "And it's my belief that these John-Bull pirates will soon laugh out of the other side of their mouths. You may depend on it that Kiah Starbuck has got his eye peeled; and, if I know him, he already smells a rat. He must soon make out that this is an armed ship, even though she *does* carry whale-boats on her cranes. And he must know Absalom Hussey better than to suppose he would neglect his business, and leave a whale afloat on the water, to go yamming on a mere friendly visit to a strange ship. Then again, the English second mate was stupid enough to put his own waif — a black waif — upon the whale, instead of taking one of mine. Kiah knows well enough that I never had a black waif in my boat. The 'B'liny' will soon be near enough to make out all this; and if she *once* lets go that whale, and makes sail on a wind, she'll soon show a clean pair of heels to this fellow, who is no sailor at all."

Absalom was right in his predictions, for the "Belinda" was still three miles to windward of us, when it became evident that Captain Starbuck had woken up, and was keenly alive to the whole situation. The "Belinda" came suddenly to the wind, on the opposite tack from that of the Englishman, and everything was trimmed sharp for a race; while the rate at which the little ship forged ahead showed that she had shaken off the burden by cutting the whale adrift from alongside.

"Hurrah!" yelled Absalom. "Cheer, boys, Ki Starbuck! Now, Mr. Pirate," said he to Captain Sinclair, "you may as well shorten sail, and pick up the whales, if you want 'em; for you can't catch the 'B'liny' with any such dull wagon as the 'Alley-hay-bad,' if that's her name; and *bad* enough, too, she is in point of sailing."

A half-hour's trial satisfied the English captain that the chase was useless, and he gave the order to abandon it, and go back for the whales. Both of them were so-

cured, and the ship hove to for cutting-in; while our dear old "Belinda" was, before sundown, hulled down in the eastern horizon.

Meanwhile, Absalom, who could not seem at all to understand the status of a prisoner-of-war, continued to taunt and aggravate Captain Sinclair, not scrupling to address him to his face as pirate and murderer, and threatening all sorts of vengeance if chance should ever offer for him to pay off the old score. Sinclair at last, irritated beyond all endurance, ordered that he should be put in irons and confined below.

"You have n't got men enough to put me in irons," said Mr. Hussey defiantly.

"We'll see about that," returned the other, foaming at the mouth with rage, and calling his mates and half a dozen of the crew. They succeeded, after a hard struggle, in executing his orders. Absalom knocked one after another sprawling, and would really have remained master of the field but for being stunned by the blow of a capstan bar, wielded by Captain Sinclair himself. He was ironed, and carried down into the cabin, cursing all his foes for a pack of cowards, and demanding, with bitter sneers, if this was their boasted idea of fair play.

He was kept in the cabin, under the immediate eye of the captain, but was allowed to come up and walk the quarter-deck at will, though always with his irons on. A place was assigned to me in the half-deck or steerage, where I messed with the petty officers; and, having laid out a line of tactics opposite to that of my superior, the Englishman and I got on amazingly well together. I was quiet and cheerful, showing a disposition to make the best I could of the circumstance; a course of proceedings which I recommended in vain to Mr. Hussey, who assured me that he would never knuckle to any John Bull, and that he meant to be defiant to the very last. The remaining four men of our crew were quartered among the English seamen in the fore-castle, and our boat had been hoisted up on the starboard-bow, where the ship carried spare davits for such a purpose. We learned that the "Allahabad" carried, as her full complement, forty men all told; but, as she had taken and manned two prizes, the number was reduced to twenty-eight. The prizes had been sent to Guayaquil, where a few pieces of gold would blind the eyes of the Spanish officials, and make

them wink at violations of neutrality, as well as at many other things not strictly regular.

I asked my messmates in the steerage why the captain wished to detain us, as we were only eating up his provisions; and why he did not get rid of us by sending us ashore at one of the Galapagos Islands. But I was informed that the ship would probably soon go to the coast, and make a port either at Guayaquil or Callao. That it was expected the "Phebe" frigate, and perhaps other British men-of-war, would be there; and that, as seamen were scarce, and His Majesty's wooden walls must be manned, not even American protections, supposing we had them with us, would be allowed to stand in the way. Indeed, Captain Sinclair might expect to get something in the way of head-money for six good men who had no such papers to show; and certainly so rare a physical specimen as Absalom Hussey would fetch double price in that great human market, the British navy.

I did not fail to report all this to Absalom himself, who swore that the British navy should never have his services; and even threw out threats that the pirate "Alley-hay-bad" would come to a bad end, and would never drop her anchor in Guayaquil, or any other port of the Spanish main, though what hidden meaning there might be in these threats, I could not then for my life imagine.

As the two whales taken or stolen by the Englishman from the "Belinda" would make about a hundred and twenty barrels of oil, the trying-out occupied some time, and all of us, except our own officer, took some part in the work, lending a hand here and there, for the sake of doing something, for it was very hard work to do absolutely nothing. But Absalom spent a great part of the time walking the quarter-deck in his handcuffs, with a face blacker than a thunder-cloud, and muttering threats of vengeance, which certainly seemed to me an idle waste of breath.

The fires had been going night and day for seventy-two hours, and we were drawing toward the last end of the rich "fare," when I had occasion to come on deck in the middle watch of the night; and, tempted by the cool breeze, which felt so grateful after the heat below, I stretched myself out upon the booby-hatch to enjoy it for a while. The officer of the deck, with all the

men of his watch, were forward of the try-works, all plainly visible to me in the glare of the fire; but everything was still elsewhere, there being no man on deck abaft the mainmast except the helmsman, who could not be seen by reason of the intervening house. As I lay there, seeing but not seen, I thought I observed a figure moving in the dark smoke, close up to the try-works, at the lee side, where the black pall was thickest as it rolled away in volumes off our lee-quarter. Presently the figure emerged from the smoke, creeping aft on all fours. As he reached the quarter-deck, he straightened up to his full height, and I had no longer any doubt; that gigantic form could be no other than that of Absalom Hussey. With a quick jerk of his arm, he threw something—I knew not what—over the lee-rail; and then, turning his face for the first time, caught sight of me. With a simple bound, he was at my side, one hand upon my throat, the other covering my mouth.

"Hush!" he whispered. "Don't speak. As you value your life, whatever may happen during the next hour, don't speak; don't dare even to remember you have seen anything."

All this was said under his breath, but with the utmost eagerness and intensity of feeling. I signified by a nod that I heard and understood. His grasp at once relaxed, and he was gone, had vanished into the cabin. I lay for a moment as if stupefied, then the whole thing was clear to my mind, and I knew well enough what he had been doing. I looked out off the weather-bow. There was Chatam Island looming not many miles off, and I said to myself, —

"All right! There's no danger of life or long-suffering in open boats. Anything for a change."

But I could not go below again, knowing what I did. It was not many minutes before I could smell smoke, when I put my head down to the scuttle of the booby-hatch; and soon my messmates, who were sleeping down there, awoke, and turned out, talking and wondering about it. Then I saw a wreath of smoke starting up the main hatchway, which was standing open, then some of the men leaping, half-choked, up out of the fore-castle. The cry of "Fire! fire!" was raised. The flames burst forth through the deck on both sides of the try-works. Everybody was on deck, and all

was confusion and terror such as I cannot describe.

There was some talking for a minute or two of efforts to put out the fire; but this was quickly abandoned as hopeless, and no thought was given to anything but saving our lives by getting clear of the burning ship. To get the boats down, and collect a small stock of provisions and water, was all that we could do, for tongues of flame were shooting up the hatchways, and the good ship "Allahabad" was fated.

The helm was put hard up, and she was run off before the wind, which drove the fire forward, and gave us a better chance to work. Absalom rushed up to Captain Sinclair with the handcuffs on.

"Here," said he, "set me free! You would n't keep any human being in irons now, would you?"

"No, no: of course not! Take your own boat and crew, and save yourself. You shall have the same chance as the rest."

The mate turned to me with a knowing look and a wink. While I was fumbling with the key of the handcuffs, he gave them a peculiar shake, and they dropped to the deck. Of course I knew well enough that he was not in irons when his grasp was on my throat and mouth.

"Here, my 'B'blindy's!'" he cried. "Where are you all? Clear away our boat, and follow her right down! Don't stop for provisions, or anything else. Let's be the first boat to get clear of the cursed pirate!"

As we were pushing off from her sides, there was a crash and a rumbling, and then a solid body of flame shot way up, mast-head high, lighting up the ocean for miles around us. The try-works, with the full pots of boiling oil, had settled down through the deck as the carlines below had burned off, and the whole mass was mingled with the roaring and blazing wreck underneath!

The English boats got clear of the ship as fast as they could, and, like Macbeth's guests, "stood not upon the order of their going." As the man at the helm left the ship to her own guidance, the power of her after-sails, which were not yet ablaze, brought her speedily up to the wind, driving the flames and smoke aft, so that in a moment more the whole ship became a roaring mass of fire below and aloft. After pulling to a safe distance, we lay on our oars, looking at the awfully sublime sight,

five boats of us, within easy talking distance of each other.

"Our dear old ship is gone!" said Captain Sinclair, with a sadness in his tone that well expressed that feeling of affection which every old sailor feels for the vessel that has carried him safely on the ocean. "And there's some strange mystery about it too. Mr. Derby, how in the name of wonder could this have happened?"

"Don't know, sir," answered the English mate stolidly. "'T was n't my fault."

"Did n't you let the caboose-pen run dry?"

"No, sir: it was filled with water as soon as I came on deck, at eight bells. I saw it done myself."

"Well, if there was no carelessness in that way, then it must have been incendiary. Somebody was evil-minded enough to burn us out of our home, but I suppose we shall never be any the wiser for it now," added the captain, dismissing the matter in a very unsatisfied way.

"Serves you right for a dirty pirate," muttered Absalom Hussey, not loud enough to be heard by the English boats. "Well, captain," he cried, raising his voice, "I suppose you don't want any more of my services or of my company. I am quite willing to take my chance on my own hook; and as for my sore arm and the two whales you stole from the 'B'lindy,' I hope to be even with you for all that some day. Good-night. Pull ahead, boys." And away we glided toward the distant land, which was still visible in the bright glare from the burning ship.

"Let 'em lie on their oars and look at her all night if they want to," he said, as we stretched to our oars. "I said I hoped to be even with him some day, but I reckon I've pretty well squared accounts already. I guess his 'Alley-hay-bad' is in rather a bad fix just now, and she won't do any more piracy on the high seas at any rate."

After pulling a few miles to windward, we perceived a ship running down by the end of the island, and shaped our course so as to head her off. We lost the run of her two or three times in the darkness, for the

firelight of the burning ship had gradually died out. When at last we got near enough to hail, the answer thrilled us with joy, for it was given in the well-known voice of Captain Kiah Starbuck, and the welcome that awaited us on board the "Belinda" was a joyous one indeed. The next morning at daylight we saw the English boats coasting along under the lee of the island, but, as they recognized our ship, they would not come near us, preferring to take their chances of going ashore and waiting to be taken off by one of their own countrymen.

We prosecuted our voyage with good success, and were fortunate enough to bring the "Belinda" home safe, with a full cargo, though we had narrow escape from the British cruisers, even after we had arrived in sight of our own coast.

Captain Sinclair was no wiser as to the cause of the fire that destroyed his ship until some years later, after the two nations were at peace, when Captain Absalom Hussey, commander of the "Ruby," met him in a foreign port, and after, as he expressed it, taking satisfaction out of his hide by giving him a sound thrashing, had also the further satisfaction of boasting to him how it had been done.

"You know, boys, that there is a space under every whaler's try-works, between the masonry and the deck, which is always kept filled with water while the fires are burning, and these few inches of water swashing about prevent all danger of the ship taking fire. Absalom, having by his great strength, sprung and bent the shackles of his slender handcuffs, until he was able to work them on and off at will, had taken an auger from the ship's tool-chest, and, creeping under the lee of the try-works in the smoke, had bored a hole down through the deck in the 'caboose-pen,' as it is called, thus letting the water all run off. It was this auger that I had seen him toss overboard when he crept aft again; and he knew then—and so did I, after what he whispered to me—that if the trick was not discovered the ship would be in flames within less than half an hour."

ALMOST HOMELESS.

BY FIDE.

"Living here in Aix seems like going the dull round of a little circle from morning till night; and, Nan, 't is like losing half one's lifetime to spend it in this ugliest corner of earth. 'T would do very well, of course, if we were rich, and could go off now and then on charming tours, don't you see, Nan? or come back here, say, a month or two in the year, to rest. Oh, yes! that would be just nice; but to be settled down here for life, with nothing on earth to divert one but the milkman coming after his bill, and the tax-gatherer, and an evening at Mrs. O'Prindy's, and the annual picnic, — oh! was ever there a bluer prospect?"

It was Miss Kitty Eglesosylyan who made this long remark; and it was Nanette, her senior and only sister, to whom it was addressed, — in quite broken-hearted tones too, as if she who uttered it was laboring under a very lugubrious affliction indeed.

They were sitting in a sunny window, these two girls, looking industriously over their work-baskets, in search of something to do; and Nan, after a quiet little laugh at her sister's expense, answered, with an arch look, —

"Where has Aix bitten you now, dear? Has it produced a new lady-love for Jack, and left you, poor thing! with only a mitten to console you?"

"As to that, Jack and I never were, never will be, anything more than dear friends; which we will continue to be, happen what may, Nan, for 't is in our nature to cherish each other. But I really would like to get away from Aix, and mix a little in the outside world. Such a tame place was never known. Know one Aix native, and you know all; for every one is alike."

"Restless maiden!" sighed Nan, in meek sarcasm.

"If we could even get away for a month, Nan, on a visit!" Kitty broke forth dolefully.

"As if mother could afford any such luxury!" sighed Nan, holding up her worsted to match the shades.

"But why not? We never have any rent or like expenses to pay."

"We have worse, — we have debts, I suspect," was gravely answered; "long-standing ones, Kitty."

"I always thought father died in comfortable circumstances," she replied, in surprise.

"Poor," was the solitary rejoinder.

But Kitty just then reached her fair neck nearer the window, exclaiming, —

"Why, Nan, just look! a red flag is waving over the stone wall."

Nan drew nearer too, and became a trifle agitated as she added, in something like an appalled whisper, —

"And is not that mother and the town clerk standing beside it? And, dear me! see how all the neighbors are strolling up to it."

"I declare!" said Kitty, "the men are every one sitting on the wall, lighting their pipes. And, oh! O my! just look, Nan! who is that man talking so loudly?"

"Bartz, the auctioneer," said Nan, growing paler, always paler.

Then both girls pressed their astonished, troubled faces against the window, and stood peering silently out on the scene till 't was over.

Then their mother joined them, saying, in a broken-down way, —

"Girls, I kept it from you while I could; but the trouble has come at last. And may God help us! may God help us! We are homeless."

She sank into a seat, and bitter tears coursed down her furrowed face; but in the quickest instant she was surrounded by her devoted daughters.

"Dear mother! poor mother! Now take courage. We are strong, and able to work. Don't you know that, mother? All this will pass, and we will be happier than ever yet. Oh, yes, mother! all that we need is you to encourage us by bearing up and putting a cheerful face on the matter."

Then their loving lips were pressed fervently on her cheek in a half caress, half prayer for her welfare; and they dried her tears reverently with their little bits of scented handkerchiefs, and at last had the

great satisfaction of hearing her say quite calmly, —

"Well, the Lord's will be done."

Then it was all very pleasantly and hopefully arranged as their mother explained to them in definite terms how it came about that the little home was sold for debt, and that she was comparatively penniless; that they should remove to the nearest city, where the girls would be more likely to obtain employment than if they remained in poor little Aix. But that night, before they closed their eyes in sleep, Kitty, with remorseful conscience, sobbed out, —

"O Nan! does n't it seem like a just visitation from God? You know I have always been murmuring against my lot; and, O Nan! this dear little room never, never seemed so precious to me as now. Oh! no palace in strange lands can make up to me the loss of my holy childhood home."

Then Nan softly twined her arms around the poor mourner's neck, and drew her cheek close to her own on the soft pillow; and, while their hot tears blended with their stifled sobs, they fell asleep, the mild light of the moon streaming in upon them disclosing the tender sadness of their young faces.

So the next day, while Nan was already packing chests and boxes for removal, Kitty stole out to take her farewell of the scenes she was so soon to leave, perhaps forever. All the years of her life seemed to come back to her, from her babyhood up. There she stood, ludicrous as it may appear, gazing with deepest affection at the old quince-tree she had long ago, in her juvenile pranks, killed outright with lashing into a pretended race, as she perched on its branches, playing "lady on horseback." There, too, stretched the broad clover orchard where she had so often sat half buried, listening to the robins singing among the apple-blossoms; and there, too, was the old well-curb and planks down in the corner, where, with spectacles awry, and flowing gown, she had, in true schoolma'am dignity, played teacher to a host of imaginary scholars; and up in the yard stood poor dog Spry's little house, roofed with green branches; and there, in another corner, the old grindstone, where a drove of good neighbors used to come daily to sharpen old cutlasses or hatchets, and where the same Jack of Nan's raillery, in the school-day times, had ground carefully her slate-

pencils for her; and there, stretching off to the rosy east, was the rugged green where the wild strawberries grew half hidden in their low leaves, and with her playfellows she had circled under the summer moon to play "London Bridge" or "I Spy."

"Oh, yes!" sighed Kitty, with clasped hands, and head waving sadly from side to side, "I am quite sure I shall never take root anywhere again."

And just then who should open the garden gate but this Jack so often mentioned! He came to her side calmly, and laid his large, soft hand on her shoulder gently, and said, —

"Good-morning, Kitty."

Then, drawing her arm into his as if he had a right to, he walked her up the garden path, while she, poor thing! with the determination of a stoic, swallowed back her sobs.

"And have you nothing to say to me this morning, Kitty?"

And he patted her little hand, where it lay on his arm, and looked so cheerful that Kitty was fast making up her mind to think him a wretch.

"As if I could tell you a single thing that you don't already know, Jack! And I think you are just heartless to be so merry, and all ready to whistle; and I going away, perhaps forever! You a friend indeed!"

And she drew her arm away, and turned her face quickly aside to snap down her lashes on the provoking tears that would well up to blind her.

And just then the kind hand again fell on her shoulder, and Jack was saying in a rasping voice, —

"There is one thing you must tell me, Kitty, which I don't already know, and that is" —

"You don't mean to say," gasped out Kitty, "that you don't know our little home has been auctioned out for debt."

"Pooh!" said Jack, with a back toss of his curly head "what a pow-wow over a trifle! Why, Kitty, what's the odds, poor child, when a month ago I bought a little Eden of my own, and, after taking all this time to consider, have come out this morning in quest of an Eve?"

He held her hands tight now, and looked steadily into her eyes for his answer.

She looked up at him in crimsoning surprise, and managed to pant out, —

"Why, Jack!"

"Speak, Kitty," went on the unreasonable man. "I shall not leave without your answer. You know who it is that asks you. My boyhood has been spent with your girlhood. Cast all your fears aside. My entire heart is devoted to you, dear."

"Why, Jack!" she flashed out again, "where is the use of trying an unsophisticated little thing like me? and, besides, I thought we were to be just 'friends;' and here you have just spoiled it all; and, O dear me! there is Nan calling. Do go away, Jack! Or—oh! pardon me—come in, of course."

And away she flew.

And when Jack, used to her ways, followed her, and found poor Nan, with pale, set face, bent over the trunks, packing and tying up, and quite brotherly, as he had always been, poured out to her what had passed, adding, "Intercede for me, Nan, there's a good girl," Nan, in quiet obedience, marched slowly up-stairs, where Kitty, in a little flood of tears and excitement, started up with burning cheeks and eyes like stars, whereupon the following colloquy ensued.

"O Nan!" burying her face on the sedate shoulder of her sister, "Jack has offered himself to me."

"Marry him, Kitty; for of course you love him, dear."

"Of course I do. How could I help it, Nan?"

"Then tell him so, and have it over, Kitty. He's down-stairs, and looks as if he meant to wait until you come if 't is till doomsday."

And Kitty was already bathing the blushes from her face in cool water, and Nan went mournfully back to her packing, and Jack paced the room in white agitation; and at last down stepped Kitty with her answer, which came out something in this wise:—

"Now just consider, Jack. Were you in my place, would you go to work and marry some one for the sake of making yourself happy, and see Nan and poor mother go off

to a lone city, without any home? Could you? Could I? No, Jack! But I will go with them, and leave happiness behind if I must." And, reaching her hand tremulously to him, "Jack, if ever we have a home again, or are comfortably settled, I will come back to you if you will take me."

He took the hand, and held it fondly; then launched out severely, —

"Kitty, you deserve a downright lecture for keeping us all under this fog, groping for our very lives to find a foothold. If Nan and mother are shelterless, it will be your fault: for I bought the little home of your birth yesterday, through another person who attended the auction; and when you marry me I mean to give it to you as a wedding gift, and of course what will be yours will also be your mother's and Nan's. So is that your only obstacle, Kitty?"

"My only one, Jack, and 't is ended," she said, looking up to him with eyes glorious in the relief, the trust, and the holy love that fought for utterance in her poor heart.

"And you will have the little change you so much long for, too, Kitty. It will be a wedding tour, dear, to Italy, if you like, or anywhere under the sun that 't is in my power to take you; and mother and Nan shall come too; and, besides, I have bought a grand mansion, and filled it with music, which I know you have always pined for, — so you will have plenty of room to be happy. Now what next, dear?"

"Next?" said the full-hearted girl. "Oh! next thank God for his sweet, sweet providence."

And down they knelt among the packing-boxes; and the aged mother's face seemed to lose half its wrinkles in the look of gratitude she raised to Heaven, and the blessing she invoked as she laid her trembling hands on the young solemn heads bowed before her.

And of course the closing scene was the grandest wedding of the season, — Jack the happiest bridegroom, and Kitty the happiest bride.

ANNE CAREW.

BY CORA CHESTER.

A small, rather undersized figure, and thin, almost angular face, with broad, white forehead, gray eyes, a coloring of green in their depths, and undecided-looking mouth and chin.

This was the woman who stood at the gate, looking off at the burning sunset, just as Robert Cramer drew his horse's rein in front of the house.

"A plain face," thought he, — he was an artist and a student of faces, — "not likely to prove an attractive study. Looks as if she had been starved to death."

Then he smiled at the fancy, amidst all the abundance and plenty of the waving fields of grain, and, bending down, lifted the latch of the gate with the handle of his whip.

Anne Carew gave a startled look up at the stranger's face, and then turned nervously away.

"Pardon me, madam," he said, "but is *Moses Dalton* at home?"

The thin face grew white and red by turns at this very commonplace question, and Cramer regretted addressing the creature at all.

The young man had always had a selfish horror of witnessing pain. He liked to look upon the bright side of life, and found it decidedly convenient to be an optimist. He resolutely shut his eyes to all unpleasant realities. In the world, he had acquired a reputation for philanthropy; but there was a broad distinction between this man's character and that of a true lover of humanity. His sensitive, almost womanish, nature shrank, with acute horror, from anything painful or agonizing; but he cared not for the suffering endured if he might be spared a sight of the anguish.

Anne Carew's distress angered him rather than roused his compassion.

He spoke again, — somewhat rudely this time.

"If you will step aside, I will make inquiries for myself."

The sneering look and cold words seemed to re-assure her: it was the gentlemanly manner and polite address, unlike anything

she had ever known, that had caused her silly confusion.

"Don't take the trouble, sir, I beg," she managed to say at length, making an old-fashioned courtesy. "I will inquire for you."

So he waited at the gate, and watched the short, nervous step, and self-conscious air, of the girl as she hurried up the path, and disappeared at the side door.

"Poor creature!" sighed Cramer, with real compassion. "If she is a specimen of the women of this place, I shall get up *Macbeth's* witches, or something of that sort, while here. Arcadian shepherdesses, scenes of rural bliss, and so forth, will prove impracticable, I fear."

She did not offend his artist-nature by appearing again. A tall, ungainly man, in his shirt-sleeves, came down the path this time; a man with shrewd little eyes placed closely together, a Jewish nose, and bushy red hair and beard.

"*Judas Iscariot*," muttered Cramer; not intending his remark as profanity, but merely as expressing his idea of the man's character.

It was a habit of his to pick models from among the curious faces he met.

The man fidgeted uneasily as he approached, and hitched up his trousers with both hands ere he paused at the gate.

"*Mr. Dalton*, I believe?" said Cramer, with a slightly superior air.

Moses Dalton, albeit a close observer of character in his way, detected the superior air, and resented it accordingly.

"I am *Moses Dalton*, sir, if that 's what you mean; and this is my place."

Cramer smiled languidly, and, feeling in the breast-pocket of his coat, drew out a soiled-looking letter between the tips of his white fingers.

"Here, *Moses Dalton*, is a letter from your son, — by the way, a good fellow, if he is a poor devil of an artist; and he told me while I was in the village I might as well see you about a little matter he and I talked over together."

Moses read, and hemmed and hawed as

he slowly spelled most of the words out loud.

"Want to board here, do ye, a month or so?" looking shrewdly up at Cramer's impassive countenance. "An artist, be ye, dangling and skipping about the fields like a young lamb all summer, when work's plenty, and hands is few? Well, if yer will spend yer precious time a daubing" —

"That will do, Moses," interrupted Cramer calmly. "I don't care to hear your opinion of my profession. Is it 'yes' or 'no'?"

"Oh! about the boardin'?"

He looked at the letter again. His son had written distinctly, —

"He is what we boys call 'a big swell.' Not dependent upon his efforts for a living. Can make love to his Muse instead of working her to death."

This was beyond Moses, and he frowned heavily; but at last he gave it up, and finished the letter.

"In short, father, he is rich, deucedly particular, and good pay."

"Wal," said Moses, stroking his red beard reflectively, "seeing as it's you, Mr. Cramer, and if you don't mind plain livin', we'll try to make yer comfortable. Come into the house, and I'll put up yer beast for yer."

Cramer jumped off his horse, and walked up the path to the front door. There he waited fully five minutes. While standing, he heard excited voices within.

"You done it, did you, Moses Dalton? And me slaved to death already, what with boardin' the schoolmarm, and tendin' to the ceows!"

Mrs. Dalton always seemed to labor under the impression that there was an "e" in the word "cow."

"Your own fault, 'Miry. You sot yer-self up ag'in' your rightful husband about them same beasts. I says, says I, "'Miry, send the milk to the fact'ry.' But no: woman's natur' will out. And they be the obstinatest critters!"

Moses wisely left his wife in doubt as to his exact meaning; and the obscurity of his language saved him this time.

"Wal, Moses, cows be obstinate critters, and they don't give half the milk this summer as last; but, if I should run this farm as you say, we'd all be'n in the poor-house years ago. Send to the fact'ry indeed! No cream, and lose a shillin' a week be-

sides! Where is the boarder? If I must, I must. There's a skeleton in every closet, they say; and boarders is mine."

Cramer almost whistled aloud at this statement. He had never been regarded in so "bony a light" before.

But further thought was interrupted by the creaking of the door upon its unused hinges.

A large up-stairs room was given him, after a short delay; and Cramer, entering his new quarters, looked about him quite well pleased.

There were tall vases of fresh ferns above the old-fashioned mantel, and on the small table lay a white lily trembling in a dainty shell filled with water. His quick, artistic eye noted this effect; and he bent to inhale the delicious perfume.

"A unique idea!" he said, half aloud. "What latent possibilities of poetry there must be in Mrs. Dalton's composition! But may be it was Judas."

He laughed aloud at this, and, clearing a chair or two, practiced the glide over the smooth, uncarpeted floor, keeping time to his own musical whistle.

Anne Carew, bending over a troublesome sum in fractions in the next room, heard the boyish laugh, and sighed.

"A man, and free as the air," she said. "I wonder if he ever has headache, or wonders about things, as I do."

Then this woman of thirty did a very foolish thing indeed. She tossed arithmetic and slate on the bed, and, standing in front of the glass, looked at her own reflection long and attentively.

Evidently the picture did not suit her. She sighed again, and began pinching her pale cheeks. Finally, turning away, she tied a large hat on her head, and prepared for her evening stroll.

Miss Carew always "strolled" or "rambled." She never did anything so prosaic as to walk. And this will give a glimpse at one of the weaknesses of her character. Her greatest folly—it was hardly a stern enough failing to be called a fault—was this same girlish sentimentality, the result of long hours of loneliness and reading of novels.

Fifteen years of hard teaching had not eradicated it; and she yet dreamed of a blue-eyed hero, who, with gentlest words, would woo and win her, turning her tiresome, work-a-day existence into a dream of

bliss. How she might be fitted for this ideal Bayard she never paused to consider. In her day-dreams, she possessed the very unwomanish power of banishing her own individuality altogether.

Robert Cramer was neither a flirt nor a vain man, and he would have been as much surprised as amused could he have known the tumult he had unconsciously raised in this woman's heart.

His handsome, listless face (she never had studied faces sufficiently to detect the selfish lines about the mouth) and his cultivated conversation at first challenged her admiration, and later had won her love.

Do not condemn her at once as unwomanly. He was no more of a reality to her in those first days than her favorites in Tennyson and Dumas.

She called him, in fancy, Lancelot; and dreamed of herself as the "lily-maid of Astolat," dying of hopeless love, and floating down to her hard-hearted knight, a letter clasped in her hand, to disturb him in his guilty happiness. She never thought of herself as the recipient of a happy love. She was invariably unfortunate in her love-dreams.

She had a habit of doing some of her thinking out loud, and one evening quoted in a low voice, as she passed and repassed the porch, —

"'Love, art thou sweet? then bitter death must be.

Love, thou art bitter: sweet is death to me.'"

"Why, Miss Carew," laughed a voice quite close to her, "quoting Tennyson in the dark? Not with any deadly design, I hope?"

She sighed and blushed in the nervous, self-conscious way he hated; and, dreading the confusion becoming only too evident in her manner, he rattled on about poetry and art until she forgot herself, and thought only of him and his subject.

At such rare moments, she looked and spoke her best.

"Elaine's fate was a sad one," she said, apropos of an engraving he had been showing her; "but it is the fate of all men and women who have more love than self-love in their composition."

"Do you think so?" asked he, looking curiously at her. "Where did you learn

such worldly-wise notions, may I ask, Miss Carew?"

"Oh, from books," turning over the leaves of her Tennyson. "It is all the same story here. Read 'Locksley Hall:' did Amy truly love the man devoted to her? Or the lover, in 'Maud,' — was he successful? And noble Arthur, 'the faultless king,' wasted his grand love on a faithless queen."

"You have read too much poetry," he said quietly, taking the book from her hand, and noting the bright eyes and feverish cheeks. "You take entirely too sentimental a view of life. I must be a Gradgrind, and insist upon your fare being 'facts, plain facts.'"

She laughed a little.

"Yes; but I hate my loved Dickens when I read of such moral monstrosities as Gradgrind, Quilp, and Pecksniff. Are there really such men in the world?"

She always spoke of "the world" as if she had been an inhabitant, all these years, of another sphere.

"Yes, Miss Anne: I fear that I know many such men. We are nearly all of us tainted with Pecksniffianism, I am quite sure."

"Oh, no!" she interrupted eagerly: "you are not. I know that you are good."

She paused, and blushed at her own temerity.

He looked kindly at her, and laughed at her earnestness.

"Thank you for your golden opinions; but I do not merit them. Thank God you know nothing of worldly wisdom!"

"But I do not thank God at all," she answered simply. "That is," shocked at her own want of reverence, "I know that he has willed my life for the best; but I do so long for a knowledge of some of the world's sweetness."

"Then, after bitter experience, you would cry to quaff of the waters of Lethe. Anne, why do you wish for sorrows you have only dreamed of?"

"So that I might taste the joys as well. I hate to be like one of Moses' vegetables, — planted here, and forced to exist until the time shall come to pull me up."

Cramer laughed with lazy enjoyment. She had grown piquant in her earnestness, — a new light in her eyes, and a scornful smile on her small mouth.

"I think that in this light, Anne," he

said presently, "you might sit for Titania. You look uncanny. Positively, I am growing afraid of you."

"A Titania in thick boots and a muslin dress!" she exclaimed. "What an idea, Mr. Cramer?"

"I don't know," he said hesitatingly. "It would be an original idea; but," with a sigh, "the look has faded."

"What look?"

"Never mind. You wear it once in a while; but it is too evanescent to be of service to an artist."

"How you make a business of your art! I don't think that an artist should be practical."

"Don't you? You have no cars for dollars and cents, then? Would you be content with an artist or a poet husband painting or writing for empty fame, while you made a household drudge of yourself? I fancy you would soon consent to his making a bread-winner of his Muse, or putting his Pegasus in harness."

He often talked to her in this way, talked as he had never done to other women, feeling quite sure that she would understand him. Their conversation would have sounded high-flown, even pedantic, to others; but she had no suspicion of her own peculiarities.

"What bores these country fellows are!" he said one evening, after she had been relating some of her trials at the school-house; "more like brutes than men."

"Yes, they are brutal," answered Anne quietly. "I don't think any of them would be worthy of"—

She hesitated.

"Worthy of what?" he asked, after waiting a moment for her to finish. "Worthy of a true woman's love, Anne,—is that what you meant to say? There is n't one of them worthy of this," he added, touching one of her small hands.

It was a pretty hand, almost fit to model, he thought.

"I—I don't know," she stammered. "I suppose so. I have foolish notions upon such subjects."

He thought that her notions were decidedly foolish; but he did not pain her by telling her so. He had decided, long ago, that her ideas of life were transcendental and ridiculous. She was plain and countrified, and yet would not choose a fitting mate from among the young farmers, settle

down, and be content for the rest of her days.

"What does the girl expect?" he asked impatiently of himself. "I verily believe she thinks that her husband will come to her some day from the gods, as Cupid came to Psyche. She is silly enough for such fancies."

Anne Caraw's imaginative nature was given abundant food during these summer days, and she bloomed into something almost handsome. He had said, one evening, that even a plain woman looked lovely in white; so after that, no matter at what pains or expense, she would wear nothing else.

They both loved flowers, and she was rarely without roses or violets in her hair or at her throat.

"A ridiculous old maid!" sneered Mrs. Dalton to the partner of all her joys; "a-riggin' of herself up in white frocks and weeds, and then nearly dead over the iron-in'-table afore sunrise. 'No fool like an old fool.' If it was a gal of sixteen, and in love, I would n't say a word."

"More people than gals fall in love, 'Miry,'" said Moses sententiously. "Seems to me yer was n't so young a gal yerself when yer was soft on me."

"Soft on you!" she exclaimed, with ineffable scorn. "I did n't marry yer because I loved yer, that's certain, Moses Dalton. Maybe I was n't sixteen when I married; but I had n't turned the third and fourth corners, like some folks I know."

"Wal, leave the poor critter be, can't yer? Maybe she's a-reapin' a late harvest, after all."

Rather poetical for a man like Moses; but his wife expressed her opinion of his remark by a pitying glance and the contemptuous words,—

"Poor fool!"

Perhaps Anne suspected their ridicule; she was peculiarly sensitive as to her age and spinsterhood. But a few words from Cramer had decided her as to wearing the flowers.

"How well you are looking, Anne!" he had said, "happier and better than you did. Is it the flowers?"

She knew it was a more beauty-giving influence than the flowers that had freshened her face, and brightened her eyes; but she did not tell him so.

"If it's the flowers, I shall always wear

them," she said simply, looking up at him with a smile that made her young and almost pretty.

"Yes, do, while I am here," he said lightly.

This remark was characteristic. He liked to see her healthy and happy while he was there. After that, she might sorrow and suffer and die for aught he would know or care.

He knelt down on the step beneath her while she fastened a few violets in the lapel of his coat.

A black figure darkened the moonlight, and Anne rose hurriedly, with a nervous start.

"Ah, Joel is that you?"

"Yes, that 's me," growled a surly voice; "but, being as I 'm not wanted, I 'd best be at home."

"Oh, no!" said Anne. "Moses is in the kitchen. Step in."

"It a'n't Moses as I come to see," muttered the man doggedly.

"Oh! did you come to see me?" queried she, with a spice of coquetry that Cramer had never seen in her before.

He could not have explained the cause of his sudden anger; but he felt a longing desire to kick the six feet of insolence, who had come between them, down the steps, and out into the road.

At it was, he controlled himself, and said, in his most lover-like tone, —

"Ah, Miss Carew! do not, I beg of you, give up the stroll you promised me this evening."

She remembered no such promise, and a moment looked helplessly from one to the other.

"Wal, Anne Carew," said the new-comer, savage at the sight of Cramer's handsome face and insolent sneer, "yer can choose atween us now. If he means business, I a'n't the man to stay here; but, if he 's a-foolin', I 'll not take no till ye 'r dead or married. Anne," — with a sudden burst of real feeling, — "he don't love yer as I do. He 's only makin' sport of yer."

"Oh, hush, Joel!" sobbed Anne, in real distress. "I can't talk tonight. Go home, and come tomorrow."

"Go home, and leave him to make love to you!"

Cramer looked exasperatingly cool and unconcerned as he lighted a cigar, and began puffing away.

"With your permission, Miss Carew," he said.

Then he added, in a provoking explanatory aside, —

"Miss Carew never objects to the fumes of a good cigar."

"If she had any sense," was Joe's retort, "she 'd object to such a blamed puppy as you be!"

Before he knew it, he had measured his length on the grass below them.

He scrambled to his feet, and came up to Cramer, hot and breathless.

Anne threw herself between them, with a startled scream.

"Not here," said Cramer sternly. "You have been drinking, sir. Go at once from this lady's presence, or I shall find means to make you."

The man was a coward as well as a bully; and, hearing Moses' step approaching, with a muttered oath he jumped the gate, and disappeared in the darkness.

Anne had fallen on a seat quite pale and helpless.

"Don't feel badly, Anne," said Cramer kindly. "The fellow is n't in his senses. Is he a lover? Surely you will never marry him, child?"

"Marry him!" she said, with a world of scorn in her voice. "I am not fitted for a better fate, perhaps; but I will die before I marry him or any of his kind."

"That 's right," said Cramer, with relief in his tone. "You have lifted a load from my mind."

Then he strolled off into the moonlight, to "cool off," he told her.

As he walked, he thought, not, as usual, of his art and a well-remembered beautiful face, but of the woman he had once regarded as a creature with neither a mind nor a soul.

"She will, in all probability, live here always," he thought; "and yet she is capable of nobler and higher things. Perhaps, in time, she will yield to dull reality, banish her pretty dreams, and become the wife of a drunken boor, such as that lover I have seen with her. God forbid! She, with her tender heart and cultured mind, the slave of his will! Ah! if only — Nonsense! I am getting as unpractical as the poor child herself. Cramer, remember you are Gradgrind's pupil, and must stick to 'facts, plain facts.'"

He paused upon some rocks, just above

a ravine where they had often walked together, and stood there, with a frown of some determination on his brow, when a cowardly hand struck him from behind. He turned to defend himself, but too late. Again and again fell the heavy blows upon his head and shoulders, until, blinded by blood and pain, he fell heavily, with scarcely a struggle.

Anne sat for about an hour where Cramer had left her, dreaming, as usual, of his looks and words, until finally she roused herself, filled with a vague alarm.

She waited uneasily for a few moments, and then threw a light shawl over her head, and walked down to the gate to await his coming.

A figure passed by; but it was not Mr. Cramer's.

It was Joe.

"Joe," called Anne, "have you met Mr. Cramer?"

"He'll not kiss you tonight again, I'll warrant," answered the man, with a coarse laugh.

Anne's heart failed her. She noticed that his gate was unsteady as he walked along.

"He is drunk, and — No; but it is n't possible. I am silly again."

She did not acknowledge, even to her own mind, the terrible fear that urged her on as her feet fairly flew over the dark road. Instinctively she ran toward the dark ravine. When she reached the rocks, she paused. No one was there.

Her feet felt so damp that she stooped to look at her slippers. They were wet with blood.

She neither screamed nor fainted.

The moon came out, bright and full, looking down upon her scared face.

On the bushes just over the ravine, she saw a soft cap. It was Cramer's.

The sight seemed to restore her faculties. With a terrible cry, she called him again and again.

No answer; but her voice aroused the birds in the trees below.

In the broad light of day she had often gazed with Cramer down into the gloom of the ravine, trembling affectedly when he proposed a descent; but now she never paused an instant to think of the awful peril.

Clinging to roots and branches, tearing her delicate hands and feet, and bruising

herself at every step, she never rested until she touched the ground below.

Then she shivered and screamed again as her hand, groping in the dark, touched another hand.

Only a second she faltered. Then, taking the dear head in her arms, she covered the face with kisses, calling him by every endearing name, and imploring him to answer her.

He opened his eyes, and moaned faintly.

This roused her to a sense of neglected duty.

"Thank God! he lives!" she murmured fervently.

"Mr. Cramer," she continued, addressing him, "are you in much pain? Can you move?"

"I don't know, Anne," he said faintly. "Where am I?"

"Here, with me. Can you walk? or will you remain here while I go for assistance?"

He tried to rise, but sank back with a groan.

"I think my leg is broken," he said, in a moment. "Go, Anne, please, and I will wait."

She took off her shawl, and made a pillow for his head.

"Can I do anything more to comfort you before I go?" she asked timidly.

"Yes: come here, close to me."

She went and knelt beside him.

"Now, Anne," he said, "just one more sweet kiss, such as you gave me a moment ago."

But Anne was up and away, with the color back again in her face.

When she came back, with two strong farmers, Cramer had fainted, and was borne off unconscious.

He did not speak to her again for days; but his words during his illness were wild and many.

He painted imaginary pictures. Moses was Judas in a scene of the Betrayal, and in thundering tones Cramer would reproach him for his treachery. He alternately, in his delirium, scolded and petted Anne. First he would tell her of her awkwardness and silly fancies, and then would denounce himself as a coward and brute for reproaching her.

Anne sat tremblingly by his bedside as he would ask again and again, —

"Who will make her happy when I am

gone? I can't leave her here. Anne, where are you?"

Then Anne would smooth his pillow, and tell him in soothing tones that she was close beside him.

It was her nursing and tender care that saved him, and the doctor told him so one day, as, convalescent, he sat up in an easy-chair by the window.

"She is one woman in a thousand, is Anne Carew," said the doctor; "too good for the folks about this rough place. Why, poor thing! she has toiled and slaved here night on to fifteen years, with never a rest. Any one can see that she can't hold on much longer."

"What do you mean?" asked Cramer anxiously. "I thought that Miss Carew was looking much better than she did in the early summer."

"So she was," said the doctor; "but, what with nursing and worrying, she is a mere shadow again. Sympathy and unselfishness are very good qualities; but they generally end by putting their possessor under the ground."

"Come here, Anne," said Cramer, a few moments later, as, after the doctor's departure, Anne entered the room.

She came forward obediently, and he drew her down to a footstool beside the chair.

He looked at her pale, thin face, and an indescribable expression of tenderness came over his own.

"Anne," he asked, "what would you think of two people, of very different character, contemplating matrimony? The man is selfish, hard-hearted, and hateful; the

woman, self-sacrificing, tender, and lovable. What would be their chances of happiness—or, rather, what would hers be—if she consented to the sacrifice?"

Anne did not blush nor turn away. She looked bravely up into his face, and simply said, —

"If she loved him, he might be hateful or kind, selfish or saintly, she would never find out the difference. A woman does n't pause to think whether a man has all the cardinal virtues or not. She loves him because" —

"Because what?"

"Because she cannot help it."

"That is the reason I love you. I will own that I have tried not to; but I am conquered. Anne, I never gave you back one of those kisses you lavished upon me that night."

"Oh! I will forgive you the debt, Mr. Cramer."

Anne attempted to rise. She felt as if she must escape, and be alone with her great happiness.

"Ah! but, unfortunately, Miss Carew, I am particular about such matters. I am noted for my scrupulousness in the payment of even trifling debts. I will pay you, darling. There! and there!"

He dropped his trifling tone after a moment, and said, —

"But, in all truth, Anne, I can never repay you for your flattering love. I am a selfish brute, though; and some day I fear you will find me out. After we are married, I mean to try to become the saint you think me, and then I shall be" —

"Perfection," said Anne.

AUNT MARY'S STORY.

BY ADA L. STRICKLAND.

"Mother," said Mrs. Lee, coming rather hastily into the pleasant sitting-room where the old lady sat placidly knitting by the west window, "I have n't seen Amy's front door open this morning. I am afraid the child is ill or in trouble."

"I think thee had best go over and see, Mary," was the answer. "I have only seen it open once, and Frank walked very fast when he came out."

"Surely, if Amy was sick, he would have come for me," said Aunt Mary. "I'll run over, any way."

And she tied on her sunbonnet a little hurriedly.

The face framed therein was very fair and sweet; but there were heavy lines about the mouth and eyes that could have been drawn only by the artist, Pain; and the brown hair hidden thereby was too heavily streaked with gray for even the forty years she gave herself.

"I'll just run across the square, mother, and will not be gone long," she said as she started.

"Stay as long as the child needs thee, Mary. Remember, she has no mother but thee."

Mrs. Lee did remember this as she walked out into the June air, across the square that separated Amy's childhood home from the little brown cottage she had entered, six months ago, a happy bride. She remembered even now, with a throb of pain, the dear sister who had laid the baby Amy in her arms when the death-dew was gathering on her brow, and whispered with her last faint breath, "This is all yours, Mary." "Have I been faithful to my trust?" she questioned herself; "or have I sent the child into this new world of married life with too little knowledge of the cares and trials that must beset all who walk therein?"

The front door of the cottage stood ajar; but there was no Amy in the pleasant hall or sitting-room. There was no cheery clatter of dishes coming from the little kitchen either, which Amy declared to be the happiest spot about the house; but, instead, a

smothered sob, that could only have come from a heart almost broken. Aunt Mary was as much at home in Amy's house as in her own; and, when she pushed the kitchen door open, she went, with step so quick and light that Amy could not hear, straight up to the little figure crouched on the low chair by the window; and, before the girl could know that she was not still alone with her trouble, tender arms enfolded her, and her head was drawn to a resting-place on the loving heart that had sheltered her in her orphaned childhood.

"What is it, deary?" whispered Aunt Mary to the grieved heart. "Teli auntie all about it."

For a long time there came only tears for answer; and, with loving patience, Mrs. Lee still held the slender figure close in her arms, stroking with light fingers the bowed head.

At last it was lifted, and the quivering lips essayed to form into words the grief that had bathed the sweet face in tears.

"O auntie! auntie!" she cried, "Frank does not love me any more."

Then came the sobs again, and it was a long time before the story was told.

It was not much, after all; but it was enough to almost break the tender heart so unused to sorrow.

Only a few impatient words over some little household trouble, not followed by the usual plea for forgiveness; a frown, perhaps; and a few more words, one leading to another, — until Amy had said, "I wish I was at home again with auntie;" and Frank had answered, "You can go just when you wish, Amy, — I see we cannot be happy together." And he had left her so, — for the first time in all their six months of married life, — without the good-by kiss that sweetened and brightened the whole day for both.

"And, O auntie! auntie! why can't I die? What is life worth to me when Frank does not love me?"

For a few moments there was perfect silence in the room, while tears dropped thick and fast from brown eyes and blue. Then Mrs. Lee spoke gently.

"Listen to me, Amy, a little while. I am going to tell you the story of my life this morning, dear, in hope that it may keep you from drinking to the dregs the cup you have placed to your lips today. Don't talk to me, deary; only be close to

my heart, for it aches yet with sad memories.

"I know it will seem hard for you to realize that twenty years ago the old auntie you have loved as a mother stood just where you stand now, — a bride, with not quite half a year of married life's experience about me. I was so happy that six months, Amy! Of course there were little clouds now and then, — little misunderstandings and mistakes that only served to make our love and happiness brighter when they had passed away. We were both young, both quick-tempered; but we loved each other so!

"I can remember, as distinctly as if it had only happened yesterday, all the incidents of that morning, — that last morning; how Leonard teased me about my slowness, then praised me for the good coffee and biscuit he said no one could make so well as his little wife; how I followed him from room to room as he prepared for his walk to the store. He was extremely neat in his dress; and, though I had been brought up by the neatest, most orderly of mothers, I was just a little careless and forgetful. I know that sounds strange to you, Amy; but it was true. He was looking for a particular neck-tie he wanted to wear. I can see plainly, now, the frown that crossed his brow as he opened the drawer where they were kept, and closed it again with a sharp click of the key.

"'No use looking for a needle in a haystack, Mary. Only yesterday I asked you to put that drawer into something like order; but I see plainly it's of no use whatever.'

"A sharp word sprang from my lips, to which there came as sharp an answer; and it ended with the very words you say Frank used to you this morning.

"'You had better go home, then,' Leonard said; 'for I see we shall never be happy together.'

"And, upon that, he left me.

"I think I must have been even quicker of temper than you, Amy; for I shed no tears then. I went about the house, hurriedly closing doors and windows, and in less than an hour was on the train coming home, — here, to mother. Long before that ride was over, though, tears were falling fast and thick under my brown veil, and my heart in agony was crying out for my husband.

"I told mother nothing of all this; and she asked me no questions, though she must have known, by my manner, that something was wrong.

"I thought the night train would surely bring my husband to me; but when it came, and no Leonard with it, darkness gathered more gloomily than ever about my heart. I thought of him alone in our little room, with hard, bitter thoughts against his 'little wife,' as he always so fondly called me; and I resolved, no matter what happened, to go to him.

"But, alas! the night was a sleepless, tearful one; and, when morning came, I could not lift my head from the pillow, for the blinding pain that racked it. Mother was as kind and tender as ever; but, oh! how I longed for Leonard's hand upon my brow, and the light, tender kiss upon my lips, that he said was always the best cure for my headaches.

"It was terrible weather, — hot and blinding, with not a breath of air among the trees; and I lay there through the long hours of that morning, and thought how he must be suffering in the city in the close, crowded store.

"*'Surely,'* I said to myself, *'he will come to me today.'*

"I must have fallen into a light sleep toward noon; for I remember being aroused by a knock on the hall door; and, as mother walked lightly from the room, I sprang up in bed, with a strange feeling that it nearly concerned me, listening eagerly. Only a few words I heard; but they were enough.

"*'Mrs. Lee — home at once.'*

"I was out in the hall the next moment, and mother's arms were around me; but I pushed her almost rudely away, hearing nothing, heeding nothing, of her entreaties to be calm.

"There was an hour yet to wait for the train, and the moments went by like hours. I remember nothing of that ride, nothing until my foot crossed the threshold of the little home that had been so happy.

"The room was just as I had left it, with the one terrible exception of the neighbors and strangers gathered around the bed upon

which lay the rigid, breathless form of my dead husband. Yes, dead, Amy! Dead! with no last word or kiss for his little wife. Struck down by the terrible heat while on his way to the depot to bring back to his heart and home that erring wife.

"God was good to me, little Amy, and gave me unconsciousness for weeks; but the awakening came at last, and you can imagine what it must have been, and what these twenty years of remorse have been to me.

"Such trouble may not come to you, Amy; but then it may, and I want to save you from it, my darling. If my husband had died with his head on my bosom, and my arms about him, with his last words for me loving, tender ones, the burden would have been light to carry through all these years. But it has been an exceedingly heavy one, dear; and it seems to me I could not have lived at all if I had not had faith to believe that in heaven Leonard has forgiven me.

"If you love your husband, Amy, never let him take with him from your presence, if only for an hour's absence, the memory of a cross word, a taunt, or a frown."

Amy was sobbing softly when her aunt finished, and her arms clung round her closer than ever.

"Don't let pride stand in the way of your life-happiness," whispered Aunt Mary in her ear. "I will go down to the office with you, dear, if you want to see Frank," she added encouragingly.

Amy needed no second prompting, and they started immediately.

As they passed the little window of the office, before entering, Aunt Mary paused; and, as Amy looked within, she saw Frank all alone, with his head bowed on the table before him.

The next moment her arms were around his neck, her head was bowed beside his; and so Mrs. Lee left them, with the hope that the lesson Amy had learned that day might be lifelong in its effect, and keep these two young, loving, but undisciplined hearts from the fate that had befallen her in the very morning of life.

BEAUTIFUL MISS MCFARREN.

BY MAJOR DOUGLAS MCGREGOR.

The Widow Wobbler had a rather queer mixture of people under her roof that winter. Not but that her establishment was strictly select, — "first-class references required," and all that; indeed, it was reported that when somebody asked her how she lived and thrived, and put money in the bank, on the proceeds of her boarding-house, while, in the same street, weeping widows and forlorn spinsters, who had essayed the business, were folding their tents like the Arabs, and silently stealing away, pursued by rapacious landlords and grocery-men, she said that it was by "making it a rule to discover the genealogy of her boarders — and her sausages."

I can't say how it was about the sausages, — sausages are a subject that I never argue upon, — but that winter she certainly got a little taken in with regard to the grandfathers of some of her boarders.

There was Jack Robinson, a smart fellow, who had made his own way in the world, — made it well too, — but had n't any grandfathers to speak of: indeed, there was an uncomfortable story afloat, that the only one who now occupied that tender relation toward him was spending his life, in strict retirement, in the classic shades of Charlestown. Jack was determined to board at Widow Wobbler's, for the sake of the prestige it would give him in Genevieve Laughton's set, — he was "spoony" on Genevieve Laughton, — and because her maiden aunt boarded there, and Genevieve was there half of the time. So Jack found an old tombstone, in the Granary burying-ground, on which the virtues of a deceased Robinson, eminent in the State, were set forth, when he invited the Widow Wobbler to walk down with him, and view "the resting-place of his grandfather," and wept touchingly over it, to her great edification. She never remarked again that "Robinson was a plebeian name." She welcomed him to her hospitable board — and front attic, and introduced him as "the grandson of the late distinguished," and so forth.

The week after Jack came, our number was still further increased by the arrival of

Capt. Phineas McFarren and his daughter. We learned from Mrs. Wobbler, that the captain was the younger son of a nobleman, and that his wife, now deceased, was a duke's daughter; and among the unmarried ladies who gathered around Mrs. Wobbler's board there was some excitement and interest with regard to the captain's coming.

Mrs. Beaumont, a buxom widow of forty, who had survived two husbands, who drank, and abused her, and spent every cent of her money that they could lay their hands on, and was looking for another with the avidity which such widows always display, was eager to hear all about the captain, and came down to dinner on the evening of his arrival in the freshest of war-paint.

Miss De Lancey, who was thirty-eight, and literary, wore a white muslin dress, and let her light hair fall in picturesque confusion, unconfined save by a blue ribbon, and wondered if the household would be interested in hearing her recite, after dinner, a poem of her own composition, which was just finished.

Even the three young ladies who graced Mrs. Wobbler's establishment were aggravatingly absent-minded, and indifferent to everything but the new arrival. Miss McFarren was scarcely thought of.

The captain showed his *Irish blood* unmistakably. He did not show his nobility; that is, not to the hard-hearted, envious male sex.

He possessed great blandness of manner, and a very red nose.

When he spoke, it was like unfurling the banner of Ireland in your face, he had such a tremendous brogue. He was gotten up very jauntily, and evidently expected to make an impression upon Mrs. Wobbler's select circle.

I discovered all that in one moment; for, after I saw Miss McFarren, I had no eyes for anybody or anything else. From the moment of their entrance into the room, the captain became important, in the eyes of the male boarders, as the father of Miss McFarren. To say that she was beautiful

would give but a feeble idea of her charms. She was bright, bewitching, irresistible. To this day I have not a very clear idea of the color of her eyes or hair, or any of the little details of her appearance; but I know she beamed upon us all like a young goddess, — like "Venus Aphrodite from the iridescent foam," as Jack Robinson, who is inclined to be poetical, expressed it.

The captain was very talkative and agreeable. He informed us that he was "an Oirish jintleman," — which would have been quite unnecessary, even if we had not learned his nationality from Mrs. Wobbler, — and gave a long account of his pedigree, to which the ladies listened with rapt attention.

Miss McFarren said but little; but she made great havoc, by coquettish glances, with the hearts of the male boarders.

All the lady boarders wondered how so handsome a man as the captain happened to have so plain a daughter.

The Reverend Theodore Wardwell was the divine of our circle, — "our means of grace," Jack rather irreverently called him. His ancestors came over in the "Mayflower." [It was really astonishing, that so many people whose ancestors came over in the "Mayflower" should have happened to gather under the Widow Wobbler's roof.] One of his ancestors, whose name he bore, was a divine in the days of our much-remembered Pilgrim fathers, renowned for the grimness of his theology, and the zeal and prowess which he had displayed in scalping Indians. Both the theology and the prowess had been handed down to our Reverend Theodore in a somewhat diluted state; but he was very proud of his forefathers, and considered that the prosperity of church and state depended on his efforts. He was also very much afraid of being contaminated by association with persons of doubtful extraction.

Miss McFarren was seated beside the Reverend Theodore, and he had the benefit of a good many of her coquettish glances. If I did not and don't like Theodore, I am obliged to acknowledge that he was a very good-looking fellow. He was not insensible to coquettish glances from a beautiful young lady, — who was the grand-daughter of a duke, — and he devoted himself to her assiduously. After they once fell into a conversation, she had no more glances for any of the rest of us.

Jack, who was not very susceptible in general, had entirely forgotten Genevieve Laughton, and was furiously jealous of Theodore's success with the new beauty.

"When we go up into the drawing-room, you put your oar in, and we'll drive him off," he whispered to me as we arose from the table.

But, alas! Miss McFarren did not appear in the drawing-room. A carriage drove up shortly after dinner, she came down-stairs in her wraps, and her father handed her into it.

"Give me respects to your aunt, Diana," we heard him say, "and tell her I'll drop in in the morning," we heard him say.

"The dear girl is so devoted to her invalid aunt, that I'm expecting it will make her ill," he said, coming into the drawing-room. "Every evening she spins with her, and most every morning. She has such a heart, has me daughter."

Jack looked profoundly touched at this proof of the goddess's goodness, and went to seek consolation at his club.

The Reverend Theodore murmured something about "angels' faces and angels' hearts," — which I did not exactly catch, but which caused Jack to glare at him as he was going out, — and departed to his weekly prayer-meeting.

And the captain, to the great disappointment of the ladies, also went his way.

Miss McFarren looked a little weary and heavy-eyed, as if she had been watching, when she came down to breakfast the next morning.

I caught Jack bestowing a glance of respectful adoration upon her; but the Reverend Theodore was before him again, and Miss Diana was completely engrossed by his attentions.

I thought that the captain looked a little as if he had been spending the night with a sick relative; but I kept my thoughts to myself.

Jack and the rest of us, except the Reverend Theodore, were forced to go off to business directly after breakfast. Jack looked back with a vindictive scowl at the minister, who was lounging around Miss McFarren in the drawing-room.

"If there's anything I despise, it's a sneaking parson, with nothing to do but hang around the girls," said Jack.

I could not quite make out what was the matter with Jack. I never did believe in

love at first sight; and Jack had scarcely spoken to Miss McFarren as yet, but he did n't seem to think of anything else.

But Jack could n't seem to cut out the Reverend Theodore.

The latter was evidently in earnest, and the captain seemed very much disposed to encourage his attentions to his daughter. I fancied that the captain had heard about the two hundred thousand dollars which the young minister's uncle had left him six months before. Mrs. Wobbler freely dispensed such bits of information with regard to her boarders. I did not believe that the captain's "estates," which he talked about very grandly, yielded him an immense revenue. Indeed, I was beginning to harbor a suspicion that they were mostly *chateaux en Espagne*. I thought that Miss McFarren did not fancy her ministerial adorer, but, through fear of her father, did not dare to discourage his attentions.

Poor Jack only saw his charmer at breakfast and dinner, and for a part of the day and evening on Sundays. On the latter occasions he had decidedly the advantage of his rival; for the Reverend Theodore had to preach, and Miss McFarren did not always go to hear him.

One night something happened which gave Jack a claim upon her gratitude, and after that she showed a preference for his society. Jack and I were going home from the theatre, late at night, when a young girl hurrying along alone, in front of us, was stopped by two cowardly ruffians, evidently half drunk. Jack sprang to her rescue at once, and knocked both her assailants into the gutter. She was terribly frightened, and was clinging to him, trembling and sobbing, when I came up. It was Miss McFarren.

"It was terribly careless in me to do it," she sobbed; "but papa did not come for me, as he promised, and I waited until the carriages were all gone, and—I did it once before, and nothing happened, and—and—oh, dear!"

"Your aunt should n't have allowed you to do such a thing. What could she have been thinking of?" exclaimed Jack angrily.

"Promise me that you won't tell papa anything about it," she pleaded. "He would be so angry with me, and so conscience-stricken for forgetting me!"

We promised, of course; but Miss Mc-

Farren did not recover her spirits all the way home.

When we were alone that night, I said to Jack,—

"Did it ever strike you that there was anything queer about the captain and his daughter? These nightly visits to her aunt, and"—

"What do you mean?" thundered Jack, making a rush at me much in the same fashion in which he had rushed upon Miss McFarren's assailants.

I saw that discretion was the better part of valor, and, muttering something about not meaning much of anything, sought my peaceful couch, resolving never to try to talk reason to a man who was fool enough to be in love.

After that night, as I have said, Miss McFarren smiled upon Jack; and as I was sure she was a nice girl, in spite of the mysterious performances, and the scapegrace that I was sure her father was, I was glad of it. Still, I was not surprised, when, one night when both the interested parties were absent, Mrs. Wobbler took occasion to announce that the Reverend Theodore Wardwell and Miss Diana McFarren were engaged; for I knew the poor girl was completely under the thumb of that ancient rascal, her father.

Poor Jack turned white and red, like a girl, and looked, altogether, as if he had received his death-blow.

The next night, as Jack and I were coming down-stairs, Miss McFarren was just going out to her carriage, which was in waiting, as usual, and the Reverend Theodore seemed to be remonstrating with her, and was saying,—

"I cannot see why I should not be allowed to escort you to your aunt's door, even if she is so very peculiar. You spend so much time with her that I scarcely see you. I think you have a duty to me as well as to her."

"But it will be only a little while longer now. Papa told you that she was going away. Pray don't insist: he would be so angry."

And, as I caught a glimpse of Miss McFarren's lovely face under the brilliant gas-light, there was an expression upon it of absolute terror.

He did not insist, as of course he could not; but as he came up the steps, after putting her into the carriage, I heard him

beave a heavy sigh. Evidently he, as well as myself, was conscious of something mysterious about his lady-love and her father.

Jack went his way without a word of comment upon the little scene we had witnessed,—went his way alone, as he had a fashion of doing of late. For the last fortnight I had not known where he spent one of his evenings, and he evidently had not wished me to know. Before that, we had always been together. But the poor lad was on my mind a good deal. He had such a woe-begone, desperate look on his face that I was afraid he was getting reckless.

I did n't feel in the mood for going out that night, since Jack would not ask me to go with him, so I followed the Reverend Theodore into the drawing-room. Mrs. Beaumont was trying to get up a party for the theatre. The captain was rather remiss in his attentions, and she was feeling dull. They were not theatre-goers in that house, as a general thing. Several of the ladies were very straight-laced, and the Reverend Theodore, in spite of his somewhat liberal theology, set his face like a flint against theatres. I think he considered them "common." That was his objection to most things in this life.

But there was a "spectacle" at one of the theatres that was drawing greatly, and was enthusiastically praised by the newspapers. Mrs. Beaumont had induced several of the ladies to go, and at once tried her powers upon the Reverend Theodore, who for a while seemed a rather unpromising subject; but, as the ladies insisted, his gallantry at last forced him to yield, though he declared that he had never seen the inside of a theatre in his life.

I was readily induced to join the party, from a lack of any other desirable way of spending the evening.

We hurried off as soon as possible, being doubtful about obtaining seats. Almost the first person I saw in the theatre was Jack Robinson, in a corner of the balcony, with his eyes riveted upon the green curtain, as if afraid of losing one glimpse of what might be behind it when it went up.

Was it an infatuation for some actress that had changed Jack so much, making him so moody and miserable, and not love for Miss McFarren? Even then no suspicion of the real fact occurred to me.

The curtain rose. There were nymphs and fairies, all tulle and spangles, grotesque

and rainbows and fountains, and all the indispensable paraphernalia of a spectacular play. I could not see that either of the nymphs was particularly charming, and though I noticed Jack narrowly, I could not see any signs of particular interest in his expression.

The scene wound up with a ballet. The principal danseuse was an exquisitely graceful girl. I noticed that as she came on to the stage. The next moment I recognized something familiar in her looks. I raised my opera-glass, and scanned her curiously. The diamond-dusted, floating hair, the pearl-powder and rouge, the dress so unlike the extremely plain and decorous one in which we had always seen her, could not disguise her. I recognized Miss McFarren!

Turning to the Reverend Theodore Wardwell, who sat beside me, I saw that he had recognized her, too. He was very pale, and his face wore an expression of intense scorn. Mrs. Beaumont whispered to me, behind the shelter of her fan,—

"I have very sharp eyes, and I am never mistaken. Miss Rosina, premier danseuse, as the bills say, is Miss McFarren!"

I nodded, and looked at Miss De Lancey, who was feeling for her vinaigrette.

"Oh, take me out! I cannot endure the sight!" she said. "Undutiful child of a noble father! I knew that some secret sorrow preyed upon his heart. She is bringing his gray hairs with sorrow to the grave!"

Just at that moment Miss McFarren saw our party. She was poised airily on tiptoe, throwing a kiss to the audience, when her eyes caught the Rev. Theodore's.

The smile died in an instant. Her face grew pallid under its mask of rouge, she swayed, and fell to the floor.

The Reverend Theodore arose, still with that sneer on his face, and left the house.

Miss De Lancey was almost in hysterics, and our whole party decided to leave. I saw Jack hurry down before us; but he did not leave the theatre. I knew he would try to get behind the scenes.

When we reached home, Mrs. Wobbler was called up to assist at Miss De Lancey's hysterics. They were performed in the drawing-room, and were fearful and wonderful to behold. Every now and then she called for the captain, "the noble, injured father," in heartrending tones; but the lucky captain did not put in an appearance.

The Reverend Theodore became invisible

the moment we entered the house. He did not appear at breakfast the next morning, and Mrs. Wobbler informed us that he was making preparations for an immediate journey to Fayal for his health. And it was no wonder that his health should suffer from such a blow as he had received, she added; such injury and disgrace to fall upon a gentleman whose ancestors came over in the *Mayflower*.

Neither Captain McFarren nor his daughter nor Jack Robinson appeared at Mrs. Wobbler's again, but in the next evening's paper we read the announcement of the

marriage of "John Robinson, Esq., to Diana, only daughter of Captain McFarren, late of the British Army."

I visit at the Robinson's, and I don't think there is a happier family in the city. Diana adores her husband, and I know that Jack has never regretted marrying a ballet-dancer. And they both seem reconciled to the prolonged absence of the captain in Australia.

The only news from the Widow Wobbler's is that Miss De Lancey is paying attention to the Reverend Theodore Wardwell.

WHEN CHARLEY COMES HOME.

BY E. E. K.

"WHAT a pretty pencil-case!"

"Yes. That's what Charl gave me when he was home at Christmas. Soon he'll be home to stay all the summer, and then we'll have fun. Didn't I have a gay time, though, at the holidays! He took me out sleigh-riding and everything else."

"He must be a good brother to you. I suppose, though, if he were home all the time, you would quarrel once a day, at least."

"O no! I never got mad at Charl in my life. He's too splendid for that."

"Have you and your brother always lived here with your grandma?"

"Ever since I can remember. You see, we 'a'n't got no father nor mother—"

"You should say 'We haven't any father or mother,' my dear."

"All right, then. We haven't got any father nor no mother, and grandma lived all alone in this big house, so we came to live with her. But, goodness! grandma's my mother, and Charley's 'most like a father; only he's away at school most of the time."

"When will he come home for his summer vacation?"

"On my birthday. You see, my birthday is on the twenty-first of June, and Charl says it's the longest day in the year. And so his school breaks up two or three days before and he always gets here on my birthday. He always brings me something, too."

Last time he brought me a musical box that one of the boys gave him."

"How long has Charley been at that school?"

"Nearly two years. He wanted to go before, but they wouldn't take him because he wasn't old enough. But he knew enough, though."

It was my little pupil, Eva Wade, who was so eloquent in praise of her absent brother. I had been her governess for the space of three weeks, and had become sincerely attached to the child.

Old Mrs. Wade, her grandmother, had given a home to the brother and sister upon the death of their parents, and petted them till Eva was spoiled completely; and I wondered if Charley, whom I had not seen, was ruined in like manner. I had every reason to believe so, for the good old lady spoke of him with an affectionate pride that justified my fears.

Now a pampered schoolboy is often a great nuisance in a house, and I partly dreaded his return. But if he was so kind to his little sister he could not be so very disagreeable to others, and after all, I thought, perhaps he would not give me a great deal of trouble.

"I must make a good impression upon him when he first sees me," thought I. "If he likes me at the beginning, he will not be troublesome afterwards."

So I stood before the glass and practiced the smile with which I was to receive him, and when the day of his expected return arrived, I debated in my mind which of my dresses would be most likely to captivate his young fancy.

"Wear your white striped wrapper with the Spanish flounce," suggested little Eva, who was very anxious for me to appear before "Charl" to the best advantage. "That's the prettiest dress you've got, and I like to see you in it."

"What pleased Eva would probably please her brother as well; so I donned the white wrapper, which really was more becoming than some of my company dresses, and went down-stairs, hand in hand with the prattling Eva, to the room where grandma was awaiting the coming of the absent hero.

"When Charley comes home" had been the constant theme of discussion during my residence with Mrs. Wade, and I was heartily tired of hearing his name. Why such a fuss should be made over him I could not

conceive. Nevertheless, if I valued my peace of mind, I must conciliate the young lion at the outset.

When I entered the front parlor the old lady looked up in an expectant way. Then her countenance fell, and she said in a slightly hurt tone:

"Why, you didn't dress up a bit. I thought perhaps you would dress up for Charley."

"Bother take Charley!" I thought; but I said very sweetly:

"I thought he would like this wrapper. Eva likes it, and told me to wear it."

"Well, yes, I suppose he will," said Mrs. Wade, brightening up. "You certainly look well in it."

"I think it's just the prettiest dress she's got," said Eva. "And that's just the reason I said for her to wear it. 'Ta'n't as if she was going out."

"Here he comes!" cried her grandmother, springing up with all the agility of youth, and rushing to the door. Eva was after and before her, quick as thought, while I followed with more dignity, as became the governess.

It was raining, and that was the reason we had not met him at the depot. The carriage had been sent for him, however, and was now at the gate, while coming up the pathway, with elastic tread and joyous countenance, was a young man of perhaps twenty-five.

"But where's Charley?" I asked.

"Why, that's Charley," replied Mrs. Wade.

"But I thought he was a little schoolboy."

"Little boy! Guess he a'n't!" cried Eva, bending upon me a look of unutterable scorn. The next moment she had bounced into his arms.

The "pampered schoolboy" proceeded to embrace his little sister and his old grandmother with becoming vehemence, and then turned for an introduction to me.

I suppose the look of astonishment had not yet died out of my face, for his eyes met mine with an expression of intense amusement.

Charley's eyes are brown and mine are blue, and I have heard it said that between such eyes when they meet is a current of magnetism. Be that as it may, there was that in his glance which brought the blood to my cheek; and, if I may believe what he says now, there was that in mine which

planted a new feeling in his heart of hearts.

I gave him my hand in a confused way as we were named to each other, and then Mrs. Wade and I went back to the parlor, while Eva went up with her brother to see him safely to his room.

"And what do you think, Charley?" I heard her say on the stairs. "Miss Canon thought you was a little boy."

The old lady looked at me, and smiled.

"I cannot imagine," said she, "how you came to think so. We have talked so much about him, I supposed you would know."

"It was the fact of his being at school that led to my mistake," I answered.

"Oh, didn't I tell you?" she inquired. "He is there as professor of chemistry."

I felt uneasy, and wished I had put on another dress. I would not change it now, however, and show him that his age made a difference.

At the dinner table, however, the feeling passed off, and I joined in the conversation with unusual ease and credit to myself.

"We must go somewhere to-night, Toddlekins, to celebrate your birthday. Where shall it be?" said Charley to Eva.

"I wonder if Eva would like to see Dundreary," said grandma. Have you ever seen 'Our American Cousin' played, Miss Canon?"

I replied in the negative.

"Oh, yes! let's all go and see it," cried Toddlekins. "That's the piece with the English lord in, isn't it?"

"Yes," replied her brother. "The foolish fellow who talks so much about nothing. If Miss Canon has no objections, then, we'll all go and see the play to-night."

I hardly knew how to answer.

I had been made one of the family from the first of my residence with Mrs. Wade, and had the proposed party for the theatre consisted of her, Eva and myself only, I should have accepted the invitation at once.

But whether to do so at her grandson's expense, was another question—one which I could not decide in a moment.

However, the spirit in which it was tendered would make a refusal seem ungracious; so I concluded to go.

While I hesitated, Mrs. Wade took matters into her own hands.

"Miss Canon hasn't a word to say about it. She isn't of age yet. If you want any information please ask it of me, for I believe

I manage the affairs of this house. Of course she has no objections. If she had I'd shut her up in a dark closet till they vanished."

I laughingly took the position assigned to me, while Eva looked on in astonishment, to see her grandmother carrying things with such a high hand.

"Miss Canon, then, I am to suppose, shares with me the pleasure of being your grandchild?" said Charley with a smile.

"That is just exactly what you are to suppose," replied Mrs. Wade. "And to-night you will oblige me by taking your two sisters and your old grandmother to the theatre."

"That's right," laughed my new brother. "It is always best to begin with a good understanding. So, Miss Canon, you will have to accept me as a brother. I see no escape for you."

I said something about letting it be as the lady of the mansion ruled it.

"Then you'll be my sister, won't you, Miss Canon?" said Eva. "If that's so, I'm going to call you May after this."

"No, no," laughed grandma. "If you claim the right Charley will claim it too, and to that Miss Canon would never consent."

"Wouldn't you, Miss Canon?" asked Eva, appealing to me.

What there was to blush at has always been to me as "one of those things no fellow can ever find out." His eyes were upon me with that amused light which was in them when we shook hands in greeting, and I felt my color rising as I replied:

"I have no idea that your brother will trouble me to decide such a question."

That was the beginning—you could never guess the end. Oh, no!

We went to see Dundreary, and we went to see other plays. After the pampered schoolboy had been home a week we started for Mrs. Wade's country-seat, where the months of July and August were spent.

Eva did not require much attention. "It was vacation, now," she said, and she wasn't going to be bothered with any old lessons." Her brother claimed most of my time, and gave me most of his.

Innumerable races on horseback, and boat-rides by moonlight, were aided and abetted by grandma, who took unaccountable pains to keep Eva interested elsewhere. Of course the subject of conversation most

frequently discussed was Chemistry. If you don't believe me, you can ask Charley.

During one of our evening boat-rides, however, just before we came away, we discussed another subject, and I gave him permission to call me May for life.

I am now Eva's sister in earnest, and she calls me May, too.

Grandma often complains of having lost a good governess when I changed my name; but I do not see why she should, for I still teach Eva to the best of my ability.